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DAYS AND NIGHTS

BY

THE DESERT



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2

BY

PARKER GILLMORE

(UBIQUE)

AUTHOR OF

"THE GREAT THIRST LAND," "GUN, ROD, AND SADDLE," ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE.



THE country I try to describe borders on the Great Kalihari Desert. The reader will find it north-west of the Orange River, in South Africa. This narrative is a continuation of the description of the journey I published last year, under the name of "A Hunter's Arcadia." The large game, such as elephants, etc., will be treated of in a future volume. As the travelling in this part of the world is very rough, none but strong heavy weapons should be taken by those who propose following in my footsteps.

PARKER GILLMORE.

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DAYS AND NIGHTS BY THE DESERT.

CHAPTER I.

A DANGEROUS RIDE—INTRODUCTION TO CIGAR.

IF the moon is in the right quarter, always select the night, if possible, for making your most arduous and waterless trecks. The reason for doing this is that that portion of the twenty-four hours is the coolest, and in consequence the cattle get over the ground with greater celerity. The drivers and attendants seem to enjoy these "moonlight flittings," for on such occasions they are ever most communicative; so, if one of them has a good story to tell, and your march is progressing favourably, get him on the waggon-box beside you, when, with a little coaxing, you may hear the whole yarn from start to finish. It was under exactly such circumstances that Cigar, my former Hottentot guide and companion, whom I now expect soon to join me, told me the following. But, before saying more about this remarkable person, possibly I had better tell my readers how I became acquainted with him.

At the beginning of the Zulu war, I found myself at Pieter-Maritzburg, where I had proceeded from home by order of the War Office. My stay in the pretty capital of Natal had only lasted a few days, when the General in command ordered me to proceed to the districts lying on the north-west frontier of the Transvaal, there to enlist a large force from our allies—the Bechuanas, whose duties were to be to assist our troops to conquer the supporters of the brave Ketchewao.

My task was no child's play, for I had to ride on horseback nearly a thousand miles to reach the place assigned to me to carry out my instructions; and so great was the disorder that reigned in the Transvaal, that neither attendants nor guides could be obtained by the General to accompany me.

If possible, go I must, so I spared no efforts to obtain followers. But although I visited the Head of the Department for Native Affairs, the good old Bishop, and Magistrates, I was no more successful than the General had been. Almost brought to despair, I ransacked my brains, and thought and thought how to surmount this obstacle, when an idea occurred which I resolved to adopt, viz. visit the prison, and, if I could find among its inmates one who promised to be a suitable person—why, then, have the jail-bird released, and depend on him for such services as my horses and myself absolutely required.

The inmates of the prison were certainly a most forbidding lot in appearance, and to trust myself with one of them for so long and fatiguing a journey, simply appeared madness, and the keepers unhesitatingly expressed themselves to that effect; so I was about to leave in despair, when I observed a round-faced, good-tempered-looking lad, whose *tout ensemble* pleased me much.

On inquiry I found his crime was not of a very heinous nature, so I had him released, and took him with me to the hotel. Of course, I thought this man was a Zulu or Kaffir, and therefore understood African travelling and hunting; but alas! I was mistaken, for he was a West Indian darky, a sailor by trade, knew nothing about a horse, and had only been in Natal a short time.

Nothing daunted, I made the best of a bad job, and three days afterwards crossed the giant, rugged and picturesque Drakensberg mountains, and slept in Harrysmith, in the Orange Free State. From there to Marico, in a distant corner of the Transvaal, I travelled, sometimes by night, less frequently by day, being often threatened and nearly always refused food and water by the inhospitable Boers of that district.

I will not say that this lad did not do his utmost to give me satisfaction, but his ignorance was most trying. Fatigue and exposure, however, separated us earlier than was expected; for before two-thirds

of my journey was completed, he died from exhaustion.

For some days he had complained, needlessly, I thought; but my mission would not brook delay. So I urged him on, little deeming that when he dismounted at Zeerust, he would never sit in a saddle again.

I tell this little episode, not to excuse myself, but to show others my error, and thus give them a chance of avoiding it, for a willing man as well as a willing horse may be taxed beyond what nature can endure.

Thus I found myself at Zeerust, Marico, Transvaal, where neither money nor promises could find me a companion or servant in my dangerous undertaking. Disheartened, almost driven desperate with continued worry, I betook myself to the mission station of Linikani, the residence of my dear and tried friend, Captain Jansen, once skipper of a goodly Danish barque, but now Lutheran minister of that lonely spot.

One thing I well knew, that if he was unable to aid me, no one else could, and that as long as there was a chance to succour me, he would not leave a stone unturned to do it.

In my varied and extended travels over the globe, I have never met more sincere and devoted friends than the countrymen of our well-beloved Princess of Wales. Reader, you may yet travel, and if you

do, and come in contact with them, I feel convinced you will indorse what I have just said.

Pray pardon my digression. Even Captain Jansen found his task much more difficult than anticipated ; but on the second evening he informed me that he could procure a man, one who spoke English, understood horses and firearms, the latter particularly well, possibly a little too well.

“ What do you mean, my friend ? ”

“ Just what I say, possibly a little too well,” Captain Jansen replied.

“ Explain, pray do.”

“ Well, then, I will,” he answered. “ This fellow, if report speaks true, has the blood of more than one white man on his hands. I have only known him for a few years, and since he has been with my people he has behaved himself ; but every one dislikes him ; more, all fear him. No, you must not think of taking him ; I regret now that he was mentioned.”

“ But I have no choice ; either I must secure him or I fail. The devil, you know, is not always as black as he is painted. Pray send for him to-night, so that I can speak with him in the morning, my friend. I will hear no refusal ; I will take all risks ; so send for him, let me beg of you.”

At sunrise my future follower was in attendance. Our interview was brief. Providence had certainly favoured me if I could gain this man's affection, for

he knew every road and every hamlet for hundreds of miles to the north, spoke every dialect of the Bechuana tribe, understood horses and rode well, and was without his equal in the country as a hunter of both large and small game.

At the hour of my departure, the chief attended to bid us "God speed," when I took the opportunity to tell my new attendant, in his presence, what I had heard of his former career; adding that, as he carried my rifle, he would have abundant chances to shoot me, but if he missed, I should most assuredly kill him with my revolver.

At this threat the Hottentot only grinned; but his chief, E'Calapin, then addressed him and told him, that should harm befall me, his life should pay the penalty, wherever he should secrete himself on the south side of the Zambesi.

Although I had spoken thus explicitly, possibly harshly, I did not dislike this man's appearance, and certainly did not fear him. Thus, before we had been a couple of hours in the saddle, we were riding side by side, chatting as familiarly as if we had been acquaintances of years instead of a few hours.

Let me describe Cigar, for this was his English name. He was about five feet six inches in height, sparsely built, and of a dark coffee-colour complexion. His head was as round as a bullet, its spherical perfection only being interfered with by the height of his cheek bones. The adornment on the top of

his head was rusty black-brown wool, as close and curly as the coat of a water-spaniel. Judging from his looks, in age he might have been anywhere between thirty-five and seventy years. From circumstances he narrated to me, and incidents he remembered, I ultimately concluded that he was about fifty-five years old.

Poor Cigar, it was not long before I learned his value! The adage of "give a dog a bad name" was truly verified in him. I was the first white man that had treated him with kindness and consideration, and I firmly believe that from the moment he was aware that I was disposed to do so, he would have given his life for mine, or fought against any odds for my protection.

Many, I dare say, think that it is absurd to believe that a black man has pride—proper pride, of course, I mean. Well, take my word for it, they have, and are quite as sensitive of affront, slight, or injustice, as any white man can be. Moreover, their cool, daring courage is extraordinary. The following chapters satisfactorily prove this, as they are episodes of his life.



ZEBRAS.

CHAPTER II.

ONE OF CIGAR'S ADVENTURES—HUNTED BY BABOONS.

“To the west of Pitsani, on the banks of the Maritsani river, now a part of Macobey's country, I resided for a time. Game was then very plentiful all over that part of the land ; but, unless you could procure ammunition at the Rev. Mr. Moffat's, at Kuruman, in this abundance you might have to starve, as a black man could not obtain a bag of powder or a bar of lead any nearer than the distant colonial settlements, for a Boer would not then, as now, part with a charge of the former or an ounce of the latter to save a coloured man's life. The veteran missionary well knew its value, too, but he had a great love for a good leopard's skin, so I determined to procure one to purchase powder with.

“Rocky kloofs and koppies are the favourite haunt of the leopard, and you will remember that for miles along the banks of the Maritsani such abound. On a day that I was out looking for bok, I came across the spoor of one of these spotted fiend cats ; for, believe me, they are far more dangerous

to attack than even the lion. But my necessities were great, so I resolved to take the risk. Unless you know the habits of the leopard, to track him in cover is no easy job, for he will not follow a path, like other beasts, but dodge about from bush to rock, with the hope that from the back of each object he gains, he may find himself within springing distance of a desirable prey. Their colour, too, resembles so much that of the ground that it is quite possible that you may pass in close proximity of one without being aware of its presence; and if you make this mistake, woe betide you, for, the moment your back is turned, the leopard will be on the top of you, when, what between the assailant's activity and the fearful use it makes of its teeth and claws, the man may deem himself fortunate who comes out of such an encounter alive. I discovered that my prey had used for a place of observation the back of a rock that some sand had drifted against, and by the spoor and other indications noticeable on the bare ground it was evident that I had no kitten to deal with, but one of the largest of the race—what you Englishmen call a panther, and the Boers a *tigre*, but leopards, panthers, and *tigres* are all the same, to my thinking.

“At the time this adventure occurred to me I had only an old flint roer, and the odds were always about even whether it would go off or not; in fact, I think the odds were rather the other way, for

often, in spite of fresh priming and repeated hammering of the flint, I have pulled the trigger several times without the old piece exploding; but game was plentiful then, and had not been scared by long-range shots being fired at it.

“Well, I followed the cat’s spoor from stone to bush, and from stump to tree, as silently and cautiously as if my life depended upon my success, keeping my ears and eyes ever alert for the slightest sound or movement.

“It is my belief that there is nothing living that can secrete itself or move so silently as a leopard, if you except a snake. The wind, too, was in my favour, although this is not so much to be wondered at, for the flesh-eating beasts always hunt up it. But for this instinct they would seldom be able to provide themselves with a feed, for a bok can smell them nearly half a mile off, if they are to windward, and so well do all the cats know this, that they will go round a mile or more to get the breeze in the proper direction before attempting an approach to their prey. The chase was a long one, and terribly trying to my patience; but, then, the reward was no less than a trade bag of gunpowder, at that time a small fortune to me.

“In time the spoor left the flat veldt and led into the rocky kloof adjoining, where tracking naturally would be much more difficult and dangerous; but I was saved the greater part of this work rather

unexpectedly, for a pack of baboons had spied their enemy the leopard while stealing through the rocks, and were now following him at safe distance, giving vent to their rage and hatred like a pack of wild dogs after a koodoo. The beast the baboons were hunting was, I knew, the animal I was pursuing ; and the distance the sound of their voices was off convinced me that the leopard must be at least two hundred yards or more ahead. With all speed I made for an elevated rock, from which I expected to obtain a good view down the kloof. In this I was not disappointed ; for, immediately in front of me, ascending the opposite side of the ravine, was the leopard, slowly and savagely making his way, incessantly casting his eyes to the right and left, with the hope of finding one of his pursuers within springing distance. But no such luck was in store for him. The baboons, when they see this, their greatest enemy, do not often afford a chance of being caught.

“ At length the leopard entered a cleft in the rocks, which I knew to be his den, for the moment he did so every member of the troop that had pursued him hurried off for a safer locality. It is a strange thing that these wise beasts always do so. They must have some fancy, I think, that if their foe is out of their sight, he is contemplating some mischief against them that may be successful.

“ The *bavians* (Boer for baboon) had served me

a good purpose by pointing out the retreat of the leopard, which I at once took advantage of by selecting a place of observation within easy range of the ledge on which the cave opened, and which ledge, by the way, was covered with bones of every conceivable animal from the size of a rock-rabbit to that of a klip-springer.

“As the day was early and cool, I resolved to wait till my foe came forth, which he was certain to do as soon as the sun had got higher up in the sky, for no animal loves to sun itself as much or more protractedly.

“A black man has more patience in hunting than a white man. I believe the reason of this is that the former more often depends upon his success for his dinner ; and again, a Kaffir’s arms and ammunition are not so good, so that they seldom shoot till their game is within easy range.

“The place I had selected was eminently suited for the purpose, a flat detached rock, with sufficient soil upon it to support a few dwarf straggling bushes, through which I could see without being seen, while the distance of its situation was less than twenty paces from where the cat would be at the time I fired at it.

“So far well, and all seemed disposed to continue so, if it had not been for the blamed bavians, which, having espied me, commenced to make such a disturbance as would have raised the dead. To

threaten or throw stones at the black-faced imps was, I knew, useless ; to remain still and take no notice of them was even a more dangerous course ; for such conduct, I was aware, they would construe into fear ; and once they got such a fad in their heads, there was no knowing to what lengths their audacity would lead them, for there is much in common between baboons and other folks ; thus I scarcely knew what course to follow next. Angry ; yes, I was nearly beside myself with rage, and but for the scarcity of ammunition, would have given one of the grinning, chattering devils a bullet. But the very row I was making such a fuss about turned out to be of all things the most to my advantage, for the leopard, hearing the disturbance outside, and possibly supposing it was a bok, or other desirable prey that had caused the wrath of the apes to be raised, came forth from her den—for it was a female, accompanied by two cubs, about twelve weeks old. The appearance of the mother and children was enough for my tormentors ; with one accord they forsook me and directed their attention to them ; but little the old lady cared about this, for, with a yawn or two, and several stretches, she extended herself at length upon her side, that the young ones might the better enjoy their natural food.

“Such a chance was not to be neglected ; with a long steady aim I covered her heart, pressed the trigger, and the beast rolled over on her back dead,

the young ones making off into the cave, while the baboons scuttled up the rocks, chattering as if their very existence depended upon the amount of disturbance they made.

“To reach the ledge and examine my prize was not the work of many minutes; but the skin was a poor one, as invariably is the case when an animal is in milk. However, I soon had it off and rolled into a pack, and the carcass kicked into the ravine; then I commenced to consider how I was to get possession of the cubs. Small as they were, I knew this to be no easy matter; but they were valuable, and their capture would be much more than ample remuneration for the disappointment I had suffered from their mother’s hide being so inferior.

“The interior of the cave was nearly as dark as night, and although low in the roof it was smooth on the floor, with a thick covering of sand; so, on my stomach sometimes, at others on my hands and knees, I soon reached what I concluded was the end; where, after groping about for some minutes, I touched a soft, hairy substance, which immediately spat and hissed so viciously and malignantly that I had little doubt of the identity of the creature. With considerable trouble, and not without sundry scratches and bites, I secured it and brought it into daylight; where, with the aid of a rheimkey, I secured it in my kaross.

“When about to again enter the cave, it sud-

denly struck me that if the father should return to his family and discover me engaged in rifling his home, I should find myself in an ugly fix, especially if without my musket. True, the weapon was an awkward thing to take into such a confined place ; still, for all that, I did it ; and fortunate it was that I came to this resolve, as after-circumstances will show.

“Encumbered with my gun, my progress to the end of the den was much slower than formerly, and then it took me quite half an hour before I could find the crack into which the little devil had squeezed itself ; and so deep had it gone into it that, far as I could reach my arm, I could only get hold of the kitten’s tail. At length, by poking it with the ramrod, I forced it to change its position, which enabled me to grasp a leg, and thus draw the prize forth. To master the first kitten was not done without trouble, but this one had twice the strength and activity of its predecessor. Moreover, the little fiend screamed as if he had the powers of maturity ; but all was of no avail. I succeeded in tying its feet, and was placing a gag of rhein across its mouth, when, instantaneously as thought, the trifling light failed me, and all within was impenetrable darkness. Full well I knew that there could be but one cause for this, and how I blessed the happy thought that made me bring with me my gun. Serious as my position was, I had no fear, although I knew that the fight must terminate in the death

of one or both of us ; yet I almost think, if I had had my choice, I would neither have postponed nor refused the conflict.

“ Further, here was a skin worth having, which, with the cubs, would purchase me ammunition to last a year ; and this meant abundance, comfort, and rest. You that always possess these things will never know their value till they are lost to you.

“ Though deprived of the light, it was easy knowing where my foe was, for his eyes glowed like balls of fire, gradually increasing in size and intensity as the brute approached me. One thing was in my favour, so much so that afterwards I thought that to it I owed my life—namely, that the roof was so low that the leopard could not dash in upon me with a spring, but had to advance slowly, as his body was of necessity stretched out to its full length.

“ It was truly an anxious moment while I took aim, for how much depended on the priming not having been spilt from the pan, or upon the flint striking sufficient fire to kindle it, and last, but not least, on my taking a correct aim. But the report answered the pressure of the trigger, and if darkness had reigned before, it appeared additionally intense from the body of smoke that immediately after surrounded me. As a proof that the bullet had done its work, I had not been attacked. Still, from the struggling that took place in front of me, it was clearly evident that it had not deprived my foe of

life, and a wounded leopard is without question the most dangerous of the wild beasts to be encountered in my country. Such is the opinion of those who have had to deal with them in the open ; what, then, could be said of an encounter with one when you are actually caged with it in the same cave ? The first duty of a hunter after he has fired is to reload his gun. I endeavoured to do so, but from my constrained position the process was slow. However, at length I got the ball home ; the ramrod I dropped to expedite the priming, which was not an easy task in the darkness. Doubtless I hurried, and as doubtlessly spilt a large quantity of my valuable powder in the task ; but my ears told me that the wounded beast was struggling towards me, and that little or no distance now separated us. So I shoved forward my musket to fire. With its muzzle I felt assured I touched the object of my aim. I increased the pressure, and found the resistance sufficiently strong to know that it was some important part of the foe's body it was in contact with. So I again pressed the trigger, and in a few moments after all was still. I drew a deep breath of thankfulness, and no wonder. I had played a game in which my life was the stake, although all the odds were against me ; and I had won.

“ So close was my trophy wedged in the passage in front of me, that it was not without great labour I passed over it and gained the outlet, but even

here my task was not ended, for it took me an hour or more before I could draw forth the carcass, and this I never would have accomplished but for the aid rendered me by rheims made from the hide of the female.

“Not till then could I learn where my shots had taken effect. The first had completely smashed to pulp the lower jaw of my assailant, the last had entered the centre of its chest and passed along the spine to near the root of the tail, where it had lodged.

“The skin, but for these external injuries, was perfect, of unusual size, and in prime condition. I was fortunate also in disposing of it and the cubs ; for at Kuruman I found a party of English gentlemen, returning from a hunting expedition in the Limpopo district, who paid me nearly fifty dollars in trade and cash for the lot, as well as a new gun for guiding them and driving one of their waggons to Hopetown.”

So ends an adventure of Cigar's ; and fortunately it is no longer, for the waggons are at their out-span, and already some of the cattle are belly-deep in the vleys, when every dog suddenly discovers he has a voice, and forthwith uses it, the reason being that the pack have got a large cat brought to bay in a fallen mimosa tree.

CHAPTER III.

UNCERTAIN SHOOTING—AN EXCITING EXPERIENCE.

POOR pussy, he had not much chance for his life with such a clamorous pack around him, assisted by several natives armed with knobkerries ; however, he effected a resolute resistance for a few minutes, and in that short time made several of the curs sing out “blue murder !” But a pawky bushman stole upon the persecuted cat, and in an unguarded moment laid him low with a crack upon the head. That night I was restless and indisposed to sleep, so I set a couple of my people to take the hide off the carcass, while I blocked out some yoke-keys. It was truly marvellous how rapidly the darkies did their skinning, and how perfectly they performed the operation, with no other implement than the blade of an assegai. The pelt was a splendid one, of deepest rufous colour along the back, gradually changing to a reddish grey as the lower parts of the flanks were approached, while the head had that distinctive lyre-shaped marking above and between the eyes, characteristic of this species, most beauti-

fully defined ; orange and white blotches, about the size of a lady's finger-point, are also to be found upon this animal's cheeks, which, far from looking out of place, give a most finished appearance to its *tout ensemble*.

I have only met the bay cat (*Felis aurata*) once before in Africa, and it occurred to the north and east of Walwich Bay. It was a larger specimen than that just killed, but in nothing like such good condition. Although these animals are scarce in the locality in which I am at present hunting, they are very common in the heavy-timbered lands north of the Portuguese settlement of St. Paul de Loanda, where they are said to commit considerable damage among the native children, their choice selection being little girls of tender years. Thus this animal not only is a man-eater, but an epicure. Whether this failing be true or not, I cannot say ; but if it be remembered how the native women leave their offspring lying about while they are working in the fields, great temptations are certainly thrown in this beast's way. As to the cat's choice of little girls, I suppose they might be more toothsome than boys ; but, in my belief, this is not the cause of their being selected, but, from their squalling more than the other sex when deposited under a bush by their unnatural parents, they more attract the attention of a prowler to their vicinity. Certain it is, if this animal is so disposed, it could easily carry off a



BAY CAT (*Felis aurata*).



piccaninnie, for its average height, at the shoulder, is about twenty-two inches.

Near midnight, for the moon proclaimed it to be about that hour, a sound resembling the charge of a troop of cavalry struck upon my ear. At first I thought the noise might be caused by a party of marauding natives out on a filibustering expedition; for, at the time I write of, there were numbers of both black and white freebooters ravaging the country. So, naturally, I laid hold of the nearest gun, a double 10-bore, and stretched myself full length between the waggon wheels to wait results. Fortunately, I was disappointed in my suspicion, the row being caused by a dozen or more of Burchell's zebras and *velde-beests* on their way to the vley. My temper, I suppose, was somewhat ruffled at the *contretemps*, for I fired both barrels into the brown of them, to pick out a single individual, in the uncertainty of the light, being impossible. I feared I had done mischief, for an ominous thud answered the report, so trusted the victim would not go off wounded, to suffer a lingering death. Daylight would tell the tale, so till then I employed myself finishing the yoke-key, which, when made out of hard wood—and any others are almost useless—requires some patience and sharp tools to do properly; so I will tell you, kind reader, just to while away time, something more of my old friend and late companion, the redoubtable Cigar.

Of hunting stories, as may be imagined, Cigar had an inexhaustible supply, so I will endeavour to narrate one of them in which we both played a part ; but, on paper, his individual share must fall far short of the graphic and intense force with which he told it to me when sitting round the brilliant, yet fitful, camp-fire on a dark night, the narration not unfrequently interrupted by the deep, resonant voice of the lion, the wail of the sneaking, cowardly hyæna, the shrill whistle of the quagga, or the merry, tittering, laugh-like call of the jackal. So I will recount it in my own language.

One such a night I can well remember. We had been travelling all day through the dense thorn bush that lies between Pilan and the north side of the Crocodile river ; but, an hour before sundown, we came out of the prickly scrub into a most magnificent stretch of veldt, here and there broken by small clumps of trees. Zebras, hartebeeste, and sassabis were abundant in every direction, a well-known indication that the lord of the forest was not far distant. Towards the river, on the low grounds, innumerable cranes fed in thousands, intermixed with lovely rose-coloured flamingoes, while aloft floated, on almost motionless pinions, uncountable vultures.

It was one of those spectacles alone to be seen in Africa, alike charming to the eyes of the naturalist, lover of nature, and the devotee of field sports.

Our horses had passed a hard day, for we had

travelled fast in the morning, as, from the unfriendly reception our hosts had subtended us the previous night, we were not without suspicion that Pilan's chief was hostile, and that some of his young men might follow, with instructions to despoil myself and Cigar of our arms and horses should opportunity offer. But now we had no reason to fear such a *contretemps*, for over forty miles lay between us and Pilan's kraal, and as he was at war with an adjoining tribe (*Sechille's people*), nothing less than a large and well-armed party would presume to come thus far into the enemy's country.

So, in a beautiful tope of half a dozen trees, we off saddled, knee-haltered our horses, and turned them loose to feed, while Cigar stole off with the rifle to see what food he could procure for our evening meal.

Having lit a fire, and made the camp as comfortable and home-like as possible, I heard a shot some distance beyond the horses. Deeming the report to have come from my attendant's gun, I thought nothing of the matter for a few moments, but when I raised my head I saw all the nags had got together, and looked as if uncertain whether something dangerous had not approached their neighbourhood.

My animals, from their residence in the wild country, had become as watchful as dogs, but still were far from alarmists, so I proceeded to drive

them in. While doing so, I disturbed a splendid lioness, who only waited for a moment to survey me, and then bounded off, not taking many seconds to get out of sight. As I had no weapon but a revolver, I was gratefully pleased that our interview was of such short duration.

Having got to windward of the nags, I was rapidly herding them to the fire, when I heard a second rifle report, and, as far as I could judge, it came from the immediate proximity of the first. Darkness was now coming on rapidly, so I began to be anxious for my man's return; but I was not long kept waiting, for, ere the second watchfire had been lighted by me, the absent one walked into camp.

With a laugh, he threw a steinbok and a dark tuft of tawny hair on the ground. I picked up the latter, and exclaimed, "Tao!" (Bechuana for lion). "Yes, tao," he said, and, without more conversation, we commenced our feed of tough, and certainly not very savoury, venison.

But food invariably loosens the tongue, so when we had eaten sufficient and made up the fires for the night, Cigar narrated the adventure of the last hour.

Immediately after leaving me he found a steinbok; but the little antelope was so wary and cunning that he could not get a shot at it, so from clump to clump of grass or brush he followed it for nearly half an hour. At length he was about to give up the chase, when he altered his opinion, for the bok

stopped suddenly, and appeared to squat; so, moving a little to one side, the better to assist his view, what was his surprise to see, instead of this small representative of the antelope family, a large male lion, which had evidently been watching our horses—at that time scarcely two hundred yards from him—when the steinbok had run against his majesty and paid with his life for his temerity.

So occupied was the lion with his capture, that he did not perceive that he in turn was overlooked; so, affording an easy shot to my follower at very short range, yielded up his life no doubt quite as rapidly as his late prey had done.

Thus my man, at one shot, killed a lion and bagged an antelope. The second shot he had fired was at the lioness, at about a hundred yards off. "I think I hit her," he said, and I believe he had; for, contrary to the habit of the majority of white sportsmen, whenever he makes such an assertion I have found him to be speaking the truth.

As the night advanced, and as it continued intensely dark, we determined to remain awake till the moon rose, more especially as the horses were most restless, and on more than one occasion we had heard a deep, muttered growl, that clearly told that "ne'er-do-wells" and night prowlers were abroad.

So fresh fuel was pushed into the fires, and Cigar, between the puffs of his charred, worn-out pipe, told me a tale of his younger days.

CHAPTER IV.

A MAN-EATING LION—A DANGEROUS EPISODE.

“IN Griqualand West, near where the village of Bootsop now stands, I was hunting ostriches—not that I would have stopped to consider long whether I would or would not fire at gembok or hartebeeste, if one had come within range. This was some years before the discovery of diamonds on the Vaal river, so that few white men had then visited that district, with the exception of an occasional missionary on his way to Kuruman. Fire-arms were then very scarce—in fact, they were unneeded, for game was plentiful; so much so, that the little Bushmen could obtain what they wanted with no other weapons than bows and arrows. In the afternoon I stopped at a kraal of Damaras, the chief of which told me that he had seen several *impshi* (Bechuana, ostrich) in an adjoining kloof. For it I started, and found the birds, but the old musket or the powder would not shoot straight, so by the time I came down to my last charge I had not killed a single bird. Being determined to make certain with my last shot, I stalked for several hundred yards a

splendid cock, but for the life of me I could not get close to him. Still the bird was not so frightened as not to feed, but kept walking up wind. I felt certain he had neither seen, nor winded me, but if not frightened by me, what had alarmed him? Something, for ostriches are not in the habit of being so restless unless there is reason for it. At a bend in the kloof the bird disappeared, after taking a cautious survey of the surroundings, which it did so slowly and leisurely that I was about to make a run forward with the hope of getting within easy range, when, by the merest chance, I looked behind me, and, to my surprise, well, I may say horror, I saw that a large lion was not over seventy yards behind me, and evidently stalking me as carefully as I had been stalking the bird.

“From childhood I had been brought up among the wild beasts, and knew their ways as well as I did those of my own people or my childhood’s play-fellows; so I resolved to pretend not to be aware of the presence of my pursuer, although its conduct told me distinctly that it meditated mischief, and, worse than all, I had only one charge of ammunition remaining, and that but a very light one.

“If I could have gained a tree I would certainly have ascended it; but none was near. To make a run for it would certainly have brought the lion upon me at once, so that was not to be thought of. Thus, pretending that I was still in pursuit of some-

thing, I struck a course for a crantz that promised to afford me a chance of shelter. Keeping along the edge of the kloof, I found just such a place as desired—a drop of four feet to a ledge thirty or forty inches wide, and afterwards an almost perpendicular descent of fifty or sixty feet, terminating in a quantity of broken boulders and jagged stone, rough enough in all conscience to break the legs of a baboon or klip-springer, if either should fall upon them from above.

“With as little appearance of alarm as I could assume, I sat down on the edge of the precipice and smoked my pipe, ever and anon taking a sly, but careful glance behind to see where my foe was.

“He evidently was an artful old scoundrel, but I was determined to be his equal in cunning.

“About twenty rods behind me were a few ragged bushes, growing among some scattered stones; behind these the lion had taken shelter, and was keeping a most careful survey upon all my actions. Nearer to me were some more boulders, small and detached; still, sufficiently large to afford the brute shelter before he made the final spring.

“You will see by this that I had calculated to a nicety what would be the plan of assault followed by my pursuer; at the same time, I felt convinced that the lion, feeling certain that I could not escape him, would defer his final proceedings till dusk.

“Afraid I was not! I could not afford to be so;

but nervous I certainly was. Still, my mind and brain were clear and ready for action as ever they were, or ever will be.

“The sun had gone down some minutes, and darkness was rapidly setting in, when I slipped from my seat on to the ledge ; in a moment after I took off my hunting coat and hung it on the muzzle of my musket, then placed the ramrod through the sleeves, so as to keep it in very much the same shape as it would have been on my back. Having regulated these details, I shoved the whole thing over the upper ledge where I had so lately been sitting.

“The lion was hungry and impatient, for scarcely was this done when my coat was torn away and my gun and ramrod hurled into the bottom of the kloof. But they did not go alone. No ; my assailant was with them, and there he remained all night, either grumbling over a broken leg, or his disappointment at not having me for supper.

“A colder night I never passed in my life, but endure it and make the best of it I had to. In the morning, however, I had my reward ; for I found the lion with one of his forelegs smashed at the shoulder, and otherwise so injured that he could scarcely crawl. The old musket was but little hurt by its fall, little enough, at least, not to prevent it going off, and in doing so place a bullet in my late antagonist’s brain, when its muzzle was not above a yard from his head.

“This was a very old lion, and his hide was scarcely worth the charge that killed him, but it is always these aged wretches, brutes worn out in body by the accumulation of years, and soured in temper by disappointments, that take to man-eating; the reason being that they have not the patience or agility to stalk with success the suspicious and wary wild game, so, to avoid starvation, prey upon the most helpless of all animals—man.”



VULTURES.

CHAPTER V.

A BUCK-JUMPER—FIGHT WITH A ZEBRA.

THE lateness of the hour at which I retired to rest prevented me leaving my bed till the sun was at least an hour high. The cattle had already been driven off to pasture, and the horse coolie was about to do the same with the nags, when I ordered him to leave the bay behind, as I intended taking a gallop, if for no other purpose than to see what quantity and variety of game was knocking about this vicinity.

The camp fire had been allowed to burn low, so that it required some patience to make the kettle boil, thus I was delayed in obtaining my cup of coffee ; but while I waited, I observed that numerous vultures were hovering over some object nearly a mile to windward, while numbers of the same species of bird were hurrying on rapid pinions in the same direction. "Carrion is there of some sort, and not impossibly that of one of the beasts I shot at last night," thought I ; so I resolved to go in that direction as soon as I had partaken of my morning repast. Younger and more ardent men probably

would not have delayed investigating the cause of the assembly of these flesh-eating birds ; but I did, for the reason that I believe nothing is so conducive to fever and disarrangement of your system, as exposing yourself to the rays of the sun on an empty stomach.

My bay horse was now in splendid fettle, hard as nails, and no more flesh on his bones than was actually necessary. For some time he had had nothing to do but follow the waggons and satisfy his appetite ; so it is scarcely to be wondered at, that, when I prepared to mount, he indicated an unusual amount of impatience to be off. This I expected, and to a certain extent was prepared for ; but the rogue played me another trick which I had not entered in the programme, viz. giving a succession of buck-jumps before I had got my off foot in the stirrup-iron. Fortunately I had not relieved my attendant of my rifle, and further was I lucky in having a good hold of his head, or I believe he would have given me “a clean coup,” as a Scotch groom of a friend of mine expressed himself when telling his master that he had been thrown. However, the stirrup-iron comes to the foot or the foot goes to the iron. Which is it, I would ask the veterans who read this? for it is hard for me to say ; for the action is intuitive. When once I was well down in the saddle, and had got both feet home, a good sharp three-quarters of a mile soon settled

all differences, and explained to each which was master and which was servant.

As I anticipated getting meat, I had several natives of the Bakalihari tribe with me—lean-looking fellows, with the appetites and capacity of stowage of boa constrictors. Spooring was not necessary, for we had but to find the vortex of the circle described by the birds in the air, to find the prey ; but, long before we had done so, we discovered where the game lay by the audience of corbovans and vultures that surrounded a trifling indentation of the ground a few hundred yards to our front. This congregation was remarkable for its numbers and solemnity. If they had been human beings instead of birds, and the scene transferred to a part of the Highlands of Scotland, they would have delighted the heart of an old minister I ken of, belonging to a kirk not yet disestablished.

It was a matter of surprise to me that among the number of these interested beings some one had not taken upon himself the task of saying grace, and thus removed the final obstacle that prevented the commencement of the feast ; but the time had not arrived for this important ceremony to be performed, for the victim was not yet at death's door, although so grievously wounded that it could not travel further. As I approached the petsi (Sichuana for Burchell's zebra, the same name being also frequently applied in this country to a horse), the poor

creature became at once conscious of the vicinity of enemies, but its strength would not allow it to rise, although many and numerous were the efforts it made to do so. It was a cruel sight to look at, the noble, fleet, graceful and beautifully marked creature thus disabled; and I am not ashamed to say that I felt grieved at the part I had played in making it so. The deed I had committed could not now be undone, and to put the victim as soon as possible out of pain was a duty, so I ordered my attendants to come up, that they might deliver the *coup-de-grace*. In a few minutes they did so. No encouragement was necessary for them to finish the task I had commenced; for as soon as they saw the struggling petsi, it was a race of all who should be first at the scene of carnage, and who should first dip the blade of his assegai in the victim's blood. The drama was soon ended; two or three violent struggles, a half-suppressed, painful neigh of pain, a tremulous motion of the limbs and carcase, and all was over. I had time now to examine our prize. She was a young mare, a picture of health and condition, beautifully marked and in perfect coat. In height she was a trifle under fourteen hands, yet her limbs had the muscle and bone of a home-bred hunter up to twelve or thirteen stone.

I insisted upon the hide being carefully removed, for it was especially valuable at the present time,



ZEBRA (*Asinus Zebra*).

for this reason, that, as we should soon have to traverse a long extent of heavily wooded country, this skin, when carefully and tautly stretched over my waggon tilt, would form a perfect protection against the canvas being chafed by boughs and limbs that possibly might rub along it. The labour of severing the flesh from the bone was going on rapidly, and several loads had been despatched to the camp, when my eye was attracted by one of the Bakalihari signalling to me, as if he desired my assistance. Master Totty expressed an opinion that he would not be surprised if the nigger had struck the spoor of a lion, while his fellow tribesmen thought it more probable that he had come across some fresh evidences of gemsbok ; so, as I wished to kill one of the latter, we crossed over the veldt to learn further particulars. However, we were all, to a certain extent, sold, for the Bakalihari had nothing to show us but fresh spoor of Burchell's zebras. At this disappointment I was about to express annoyance, when I observed a certain amount of earnestness manifested among my people that denoted something unusual in the tracks they had been examining. This postponed, if it did not suppress, my wrath. After a deal of chattering, and several differences of opinion being urged, the man who called us up expressed a wish for me to follow him. I did not desire to kill any more petsi, I explained to the Hottentot, but he said it was

another wounded one, so it could not be far off. He then pointed out the spoor of the second victim, told me that it had got a wounded hind leg, and that we would certainly come across it in less than a mile.

This was putting a new face on the matter, so off we started in pursuit; for there is nothing so reprehensible, I may say unpardonable, in a hunter, I will not say sportsman, as to leave a wounded animal to die a lingering death of agony, the result, possibly, of want of food and water.

The spoor was not difficult to distinguish, for the unfortunate had followed the steps of his companions; the disabled limb leaving in places quite a noticeable furrow, where the tip of the hoof had dragged along the ground. The pace was made so fast by the Bakalihari that I had to move my horse at a trot to keep on proper terms with them. At their best gait, on they went, never hesitating or pausing for an instant. Not a word was spoken by any one; this very silence proclaiming how absorbed they were in their work, how confidently they expected success, and with what firmness of belief they anticipated soon shedding more blood. Fiends they looked, and fiends they were for the time being, having thrown to the winds every other thought and idea save the love of slaughter. Steadily and unweariedly the pursuers kept up their pace, although we had now gone more than a couple of miles, they leading me by about fifty yards, more

thickly scattered brush taking the place of the former veldt, when, phew ! there was the deuce to pay among the natives. In a moment they had scattered like chaff before the wind ; and I had time to notice all that transpired, for my horse had stopped as dead as if he had been shot. The wounded animal, from exhaustion and pain, had been unable to keep up with his comrades, so had laid down behind a bush, from where he had either got wind of, or heard his pursuers advance, and, determined not to give in, or die a death unworthy of his race (for these animals will always fight to the last), sprang to his feet, and, open-mouthed, made for the nearest of the darkies, who was so taken by surprise, that, forgetting he had a weapon in his hand, he sprang on one side, without attempting to use it—an example promptly followed by all his companions. For a time the assailants became the assailed, and utterly demoralized by the suddenness of the attack ; but it was easy to see on whose side victory would terminate, for loss of blood had sadly weakened the brave beast, and one of its hind legs hung utterly useless, as if attached to his body by only the skin. Yes, my fellows were taken by surprise ; and their leader only escaped by a few feet being made acquainted with the pet's jaws—a bite that possibly would have cost him a limb, and most certainly expatriation from his tribe : serious consequences, no one will deny ; but, in spite of

this, the demoralization of the hunters only lasted a few moments. Without consultation their plan of reprisal was formed, and all acted as promptly upon it as if they had discussed the matter for hours in all its bearings. Thus the most active advanced and drew on himself the attack of the enraged beast; and no way loth for the encounter, it accepted the gauntlet thrown down, and charged with surprising celerity; considering it had only three legs, when the rest of the Bakalihari closed upon the poor beast's flanks and drove their assegais home and home in oft-repeated thrusts. Flesh and blood, with the bravest heart to back it, could not stand such treatment long; so the gallant stallion toppled over in a final effort to get at one of his slaughterers, and died, as he had proved himself to be, a brave beast.



ZEBRAS.



CHAPTER VI.

DIFFERENT SPECIES OF ZEBRAS—WEAVER-BIRDS AND SNAKES.

PERSONS who have travelled upon the frontier of the Cape Colony know the distinctions between the quagga, Burchell's zebra, and the zebra proper; but, for the benefit of those that have not visited those distant possessions of her Majesty, I will do my best to give them.

The quagga is found on sandy flats, the Orange Free State having been at one time its favourite habitat, and is still to be seen on the edge of the Kalihari desert, and such adjoining districts, where the surface is level, sandy, and free from stone. Its hoofs, in consequence, are large, with "the frog very much let down." Its back, neck, flanks, head, and mane, are alone marked with the stripes peculiar to its race. The tail of this animal is more horse-like than that of the two other species; further, it is very fond of society, and may frequently be observed associated with vildebeeste, hartebeeste, ostriches, or even blessbok. A man

who rides under thirteen stone, if fairly mounted, should have no difficulty in riding it down.

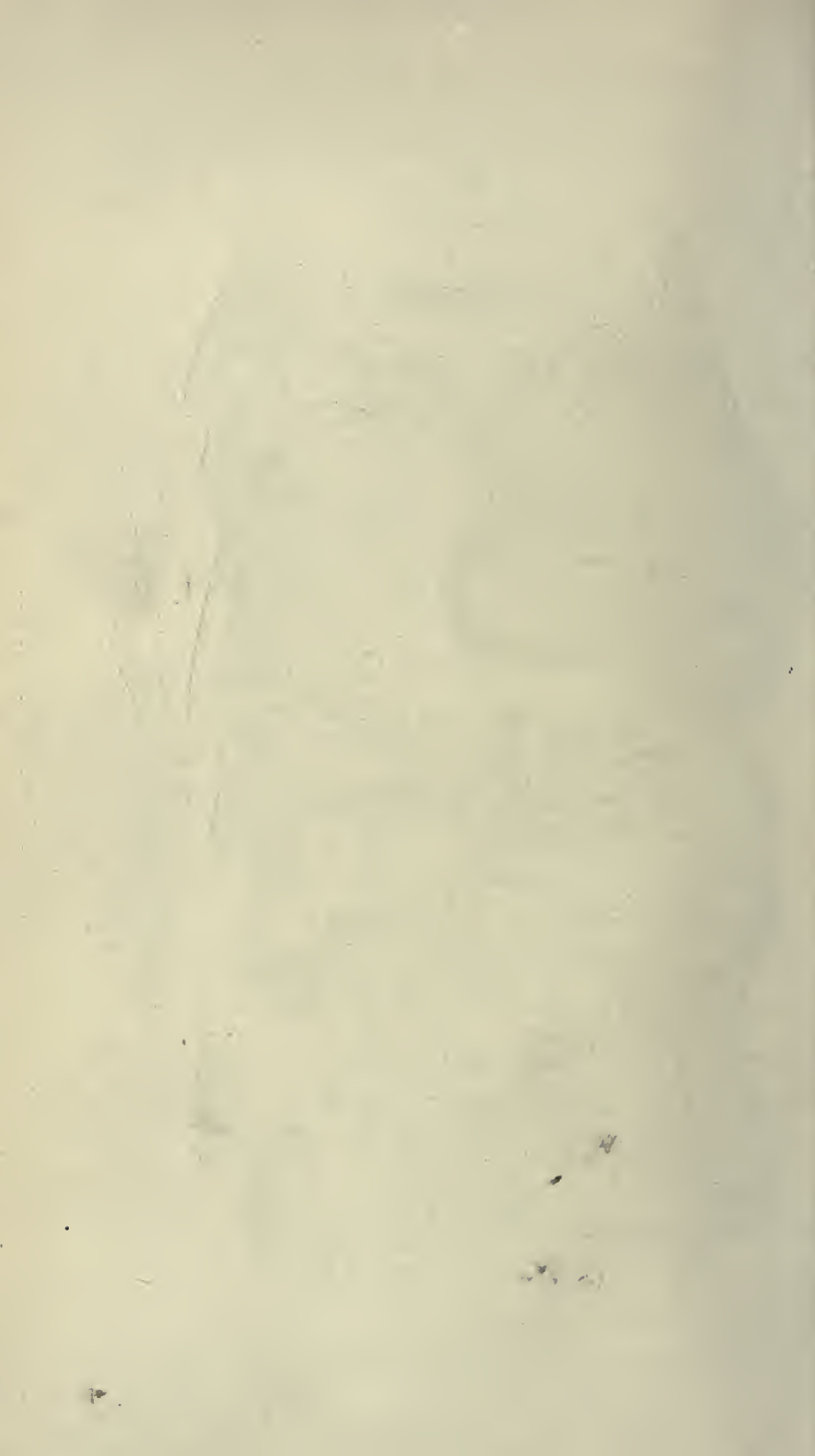
The Burchell's zebra, or petzi, has the same markings as the quagga, but they subtend further down the rump, thighs, and hind-quarters, even to the houghs and knees; their feet are smaller than those of the first mentioned, and are much harder in their composition; thus they will generally be discovered on rugged, stony lands, but not on the mountains. Their tail is more asinine than that of the first-mentioned.

The zebra proper is a thorough mountain dweller; from the smallness, cup-like shape, and hardness of its hoofs, it can clamber, with immunity from injury, almost where a goat can go. The shape of its tail is quite asinine. The characteristic markings of the family to which it belongs are much more distinct and clearly defined than in the two other species; moreover, they extend down the legs over the fetlocks to the actual hoofs. In some rugged portions of Cape Colony the zebra still exists, or did a year or two ago. My friend, Mr. Hilton Barber, had a drove of them on his mountain farm, about twelve miles from Craddock; but they had become so wary, as well as savage, that few persons were desirous of paying them a visit, unless at the season when their numbers require diminishing.

Burchell's zebras have been seen in the company of the zebra proper or quagga; but I never heard



BURCHELL'S ZEBRA (*Asinus Burchelli*).



of the last-mentioned being known to associate with the true zebra.

All of the three species have the low, thick withers of the ass, and in many respects strongly resemble that patient servant of man. Still, in form they do not much look like one another; the true zebra being very heavily and muscularly built, the quagga quite the reverse, while the petsi takes an intermediate place between both. To a judge of horseflesh, the limbs of all these species, particularly from the knee and houghs down, must be subjects of admiration, for in no other language can they be described better, than by saying that they are simply perfect in form for work and endurance.

The quagga, I know, can be broken to harness; the petsi, I have heard, and believe, can; but I very much doubt whether the true zebra could ever be subdued or tamed sufficiently to transform it into a draught animal. This is much to be regretted; for it has been gifted in no ordinary degree with three great virtues—speed, endurance, and a total disregard for variations of temperature, which are very great in its habitat, at different seasons of the year.

After so long a deviation from the actual work in hand, I will now return to it. Having despatched the remainder of the meat to camp, and the supply being more than sufficient for present wants, with only one attendant I made a detour of several miles

to prospect the country, and so learn what game was to be expected to fall to our rifles during our sojourn in this neighbourhood. But I was disappointed in my expectations; for, although I saw several gemsbok, and a couple of blue vildebeeste in the society of a hartebeest, they were so wild that I could not get near them. This I can only account for by the belief that they had lately been hunted by Boers, roving bands of whom were reported to be in the neighbourhood. As I had no desire to come across these freebooters, and much less anxious that they should find my waggons when I was absent from them, I returned to camp early. Chummy came in soon after with the tit-bits of a hartebeest, which he had killed some miles off; so the bush people were sent off to bring back what meat they could. Little, I may say, we expected to see of it, for they were accompanied by none of our servants, and we had resolved trecking as soon as the moon rose.

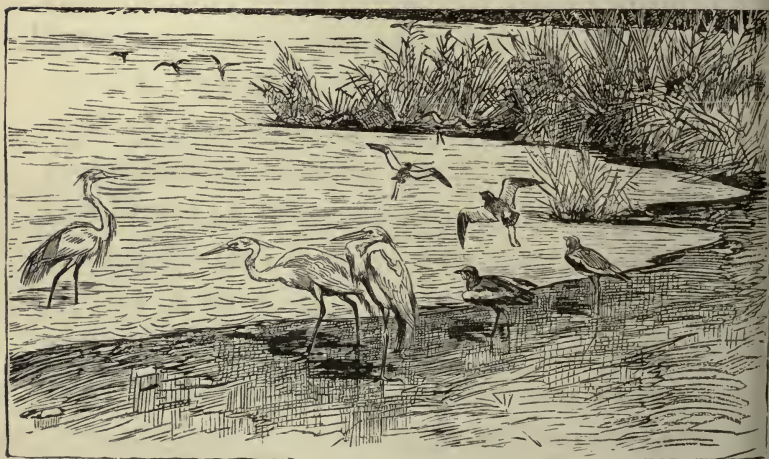
The vley, on the margin of which we had outspanned, was a charming spot, had all the appearance of being permanent, and must, at one time, have been a perfect hunter's elysium. In several places the trees grew at the water's edge, the termination of their limbs in many instances drooping down within a few feet of its placid surface. When this is the case, you will invariably find a pear-shaped weaver-bird's (baiya) nest suspended from

its termination. Why such a position should be selected by these charming little feathered beauties for their nursery doubtlessly is, that their progeny will there be safe from the attentions of different varieties of tree snakes, the most numerous among which is the *Bucephalus capensis*, or green tree-climber. The tendrils on which these nests are hung are too slim for the reptile to descend on, and sufficiently elevated not to be reached by the enemy from the water. The choice of such a locality for incubating their eggs and rearing their delicate offspring looks very much as if these ornaments of creation were gifted with something approaching closely to reasoning powers. Truly Nature is a wonderful teacher.

As this was not the breeding season, I sent one of my people, the tall Zulu, to gather a large quantity of these nests ; for, from their being so springy, or even elastic, they are admirably adapted for placing between guns or other hard materials when packed for transportation. More than that, if the curly hair of the klip-springer cannot be obtained, there is no better material I know of with which to stuff a horse's saddle. I am not the first person, however, who has applied these nests to this purpose, for I and others got the idea from the mahouts, in India, who constantly use them for stuffing their elephant pads.

By-the-by, recalling India to memory, reminds

me that there are birds here very, very much, if not exactly, resembling the lanklat and bandani, which the Hindoos assert pick the shreds of meat from between the tiger's teeth, and which the Bechuanas assert perform the same duty for the lion. On first hearing such strange statements, the listener is more than disposed to believe that they are fabrications of an inventive mind; but when a similar story is repeated thousands of miles from where the first was heard, and by a people that could have no communication, somehow or other you begin to surmise that there must be some truth in it. After all, it is not more remarkable than that a species of plover picks off the leeches which adhere to the crocodile's mouth—now known to be the case, although Herodotus, who first gave the fact to the world, was dubbed a liar for his pains.



VLEY IN THE INTERIOR.

CHAPTER VII.

MY PET LIONS—A TERRIBLE NIGHT.

BUT, as we have some hours to wait ere the moon rises, if the reader will come and rest with me inside my waggon (in imagination, at least), I will tell him of a late experience in "the big game country."

The majority of people have possessed pets of some description or other, but few are able to say that they have possessed a couple of tame lions, for tame they were when I owned Leo and Juno, and I can vouch that more interesting pets were never the property of any individual. How I obtained them I will endeavour, to the best of my ability, to inform my readers.

In those happy days, now some years past, when war had not broken out between the Boers of the Transvaal and Great Britain, I was hunting large game to the north of the Crocodile river, where the country of Lubengulo, king of the Matabeles, abuts on that of Kama, king of Bamangwatos.

The margin of the Crocodile river here is covered with thick timber or dense masses of reeds, but as

you retire a mile from the above-named water-course, bush-veldt becomes the dominant feature of the landscape, and was the haunt of innumerable species of the larger descriptions of African antelopes. This may well be accepted when I state that from my waggon-box I have seen at break of day, hartebeeste, vildebeeste, eland, and sassabi within easy rifle range of my position. Moreover, buffalo, quagga (the favourite food of lions), and giraffe were far from scarce in this vicinity. Thus it is not to be wondered at that the king of beasts should be found numerous where there was to be obtained such an abundance of his natural food, especially as water and shelter, two necessities to his existence, were ever close at hand.

Nightly I had heard for nearly a month the deep-muttered growl or bass roar of the monarch of the waste, but the weather being fine and the nights clear, I had little dread of his attacking either my bullocks or horses. Another protection I possessed against lions intruding themselves into my camp, was that with me were a troop of dogs of such excellence as had seldom been seen in an African hunter's camp. Several of these hounds had been imported, and great care was taken in their selection that strength and courage should be their *sine quâ non*, as they were to be my companions in a very distant and dangerous journey.

The other dogs that completed the pack had

been procured from the colony, and therefore had considerable experience in the pursuit of the smaller varieties of buck, as well as an occasional encounter with some of the larger members of the cat family, such as leopards, caracals, etc., for these species of the *carnivoræ* still are to be found in considerable abundance south of the Orange River. The morning previous to the occurrence of the incident to which I owe the obtaining of my two pets, Leo and Juno, broke with such an appearance of bad weather that, by the advice of my servants, I determined to shift my camping place to more elevated and, therefore, drier ground. A ridge, thickly covered with mapani brush, and here and there studded with meruli and mimosa trees, was selected for our new encampment, and as the distance to it was not over six miles, it was not deemed necessary to inspan the bullocks till three hours after midday. Although the weather had threatened since sunrise, the rain kept off until we had completed about half our journey, when, as is not unusual in tropical climates, one of those downpours began that have to be experienced to be appreciated. But this was not all; with the rain came thunder, and with the thunder, lightning, of which it would be difficult to say whether the awe-inspiring voice of the one was more terrible to listen to than the sight of the brilliant, rapidly repeated flashes of the other. Bullocks cannot treck with wet yokes, or their

shoulders become galled ; thus I had to call a halt, although no shelter was near to shield us from the warring elements. I have beheld thunderstorms in the Rocky Mountains, West Indies, and Malay Archipelago, but never have I witnessed them so terrific as in the interior of South Africa ; and I am certain that in no other part of the world are they so dangerous. And the whole animal creation seems to be well aware of this ; for whether it be the Kaffir or the ox, the elephant or the giraffe, all equally appear to dread the tempest's violence, and become for the time being so prostrated with fear as to remain awe-stricken in the locality where they have been overtaken, without one thought of seeking shelter. Having upwards of a couple of hundred-weight of gunpowder in my waggon, to have it struck by the electric fluid would have been certain destruction to all my belongings, so I took the only precaution in my power, to prevent such a catastrophe, viz. to unfasten the *treck-tow* (chain) from the dissel-boom, so that that important portion of my gear should not act as a conductor to the inflammable part of my load. In proportion to the violence of these hurricanes, as short is their duration ; thus in an hour the storm had passed to leeward, and nought remained to indicate its visit, save an occasional distant flash of lightning and the muttered deep intonation of the retreating thunder. Soon the cattle were again made fast

to the waggon, and with hurried steps we pursued the remainder of our journey. No doubt we rejoiced that the storm had passed; but if I and my Kaffirs did so, every creature imbued with life appeared to do likewise. Thus the francolins and korans, which had formerly been silent, now piped and chattered from every ant-heap; while the gorgeous bee-eaters, sugar-birds, brilliant orioles, and sociable grosbeaks disported themselves in every direction. Even the grasshoppers and lizards had found a voice, and with it seemed to thank the Creator of the Universe that the danger had now passed. Of course, after the rain the trekking was heavy, but my fat and young bullocks, with a light load behind them, soon traversed the intermediate space to our new camping-ground.

In a well-organized hunting expedition, every member of it has his allotted task to perform; thus, when a halt is called, some are employed in cutting thorn bushes to make the cattle kraal, while others gather fuel for the night fires, or assist the cook in preparing the evening meal. Where we had outspanned timber was not abundant, and what we obtained there was so saturated with the late rain that it was not without considerable difficulty a fire could be made from it. As the sky had become clear and bright, master as well as man anticipated a dry night; but, as the sun went down, dark opaque clouds again commenced rising to

the eastward, which gradually shut up the face of the heavens, causing the surroundings to be involved in inky darkness. The wind now began to rise in oft-repeated fitful gusts, driving with it sheets of penetrating rain that made even the interior of my waggon far from comfortable.

It might have been eight o'clock or thereabouts, when my Bechuana hunter reported to me that the bullocks were exceedingly uneasy in their kraal, adding further, "Baas! there are lions about, and, as the fence round the bullocks is not strong, I think you had better tie them up to their yokes." Advice from such a source was not to be disregarded, for this man had spent all his life among the wild beasts of interior Africa, and knew their habits and haunts as well as we do those of any of our domestic animals. Thus, after much trouble, and with the assistance of my lanterns, the cattle were removed from the kraal and made fast to their respective yokes, while the end of the treck-tow furthest from the waggon was firmly secured to a tree by the aid of a green rheim, the brake on the hind wheels being firmly jammed down. Having taken these precautions, the hunter bade me good night, and turned in among his companions under my desert house.

The poet says, "coming events cast their shadows before." Some feeling of this kind must have actuated me, for I had an intuitive perception that, before daybreak made its appearance, some mis-

fortune or other would occur. Again and again I filled my pipe, and almost as often took my guns from their racks, to assure myself that their breeches were not under the drip that came from many a rent in the tilt. I tried to read, but, although I had that wonderfully fascinating work, "The Woman in White," I could not concentrate my mind upon it. Twice I had gone forth and added fuel to the far from brilliant watchfires, and while doing so did not fail to observe that none of the bullocks had lain down, but erect, with anxious, distended eyes, gazed earnestly up to windward. Treck oxen are, without exception, obstinate, perverse creatures, sometimes taking alarm where nought is to be dreaded, at other times not taking the slightest precaution to avoid danger where it must have been obvious to them. So, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, I betook myself to my shelter. I had about finished another pipe, when a sudden prolonged pull upon the treck-tow so violently shook my domicile, that if proper precautions had not been taken, it doubtlessly would have been overturned. At this moment my driver placed his head under the curtain of the tilt, and in smothered words told me that he knew there were lions round us. Not doubting the truth of his statement, I professed to disbelieve it, for, said I, "Why don't the dogs challenge them? Where are the lazy curs?"

William, for that was my driver's name, promptly

answered, "If one or two lions about, dogs bark; but I think that there are seven or eight, and that they are scattered round about us, so that the dogs are afraid to go into the bush." Scarcely had my boy done speaking when I thought that the waggon must really go over, for the horses that were secured to the sheltered side of it, commenced to pull and jerk their halters with such violence as several times to raise the leeward wheels an inch or two off the ground. As nothing so reassures these animals, when alarmed, as the human voice, I got out of my conveyance and stood at their heads and talked to them in such kindly language as they were conversant with; in the mean time summoning all my attendants from under the waggon, and ordering them to pile on more fuel so as to make as much blaze as possible.

Dark as the night was, all were busy around the little encampment, if I except the dogs, who seemed to be possessed of such unaccountable timidity that neither words nor blows could drive them out from the shelter they had taken between the wheels. For some minutes all had become quiet, and I began to hope that it had been a false alarm, when a roar so loud and close as to awake the echoes of the surrounding koppies, and startle us, broke the monotonous stillness of the night. Such a roar I have never heard previously or since; let he that likes say what he may, it made the earth tremble.

To the reader it may appear impossible that any animal can produce a volume of sound that almost rivals the thunder in its density ; but let me assure him, if he has heard a mature male lion—not a zoological one—in the full vigour of his life, give utterance to his wrath, he will agree with me that there is a sublimity and grandeur and volume in the voice, which, if it does not equal the depth and power of thunder, very nearly approaches to it.

If quiet had comparatively reigned before, now all was excitement. The bullocks rushed to and fro, trying to break their rheims, the horses reared and pulled upon their halters as if determined to strangle themselves or upset the waggon, while every servant who was not armed seized a firebrand and shouted and called to the beasts of burthen with the hope of stilling their fears.

So intense was the darkness that nothing could be seen, yet William fired a couple of shots in the direction from which he imagined the roar proceeded. The blaze and report of his heavy elephant gun, one would imagine, would have driven off anything in the form of a quadruped ; but not so, the lion roared again at even shorter distance than at first, causing the bullocks to become more frantic, and, therefore, to use further power and strength to break their rheims.

I thought I could trust my rheims—new buffalo ones—but, alas ! I was in error, for a more violent

struggle than had previously been made took place, and they gave way, so the whole team went down to leeward as if they were stampeding before a forest fire. As this method, adopted by lions when about to attack a span of cattle, for it certainly is a preconcerted and arranged plan, may not be generally known, I will briefly attempt to describe it. Lions, as a rule, hunt in family parties. A very old male, not unfrequently incapacitated from taking an active part in pursuing game, is generally to be found at the head of such a *coterie*, and on him devolves no unimportant part of the programme adopted by his descendants when a trader's or traveller's cattle are destined to become the victims of their ferocity and power.

Down to leeward, a hundred or more paces below where the bullocks are made fast, the young, active males and lionesses place themselves behind what available cover is to be found. This being done, the aged mannikin goes to windward of the encampment and shakes out his abundant mane in the breeze, so that the effluvia from it may be carried down to the excited draught animals.

One sniff of the tainted breeze brings every ox to its feet in a moment ; when standing, often trembling with fear, they gaze with dilated eyes into the impenetrable darkness. Closer and closer approaches the aged lion to his victims, shaking and reshaking the tawny dense covering of his fore-quarters ; then,

if the traveller's rheims be not strong, he may look out for a stampede; but should they hold, the aggressor, as a climax to his former manœuvre, gives utterance to his deepest and loudest roar, when the frightened treck beasts, if not secured by the stoutest fastenings that can be obtained, will break free and rush with inconceivable rapidity into the very jaws of their foes secreted to leeward.

Such was the plan adopted on the occasion of which I speak, and the result was the loss of three of my best draught bullocks. However, I had one satisfaction; assisted by the light from our now blazing fires, as the patriarch followed on their heels, I was enabled to place a pair of ten-to-the-pound bullets through his tawny hide. This I was certain of, for I heard distinctly the thuds, those never-to-be-forgotten and tell-tale sounds that quickly respond to the delivery of successful shots.

My performance in marksmanship was not wonderful, for the object I fired upon was large, and within fifteen paces of where I stood. The foe, nevertheless, did not drop in his tracks, but continued his course, evidently intending to join his relatives and participate in the provided banquet of newly slaughtered beef. But "man proposes, God disposes," for many an ominous growl of pain distinctly told that the old marauder was not now in a frame of mind or body to enjoy the feast. The night was so intensely dark, that it would have been

utter madness to have risked my life or any of my people's to drive the lions from their prey ; so we satisfied ourselves by piling on fresh fuel, and firing an occasional shot in the direction in which we knew the carnival was taking place.

With the break of day the lions had departed, leaving behind them nothing but a quantity of scattered bones, a dozen hyænas, and as many more jackals, to tell of the tragedy which had occurred but a few hours before.

Soon the unclean brutes followed the example of their betters, and skulked off in various directions, doubtless with the intention of returning when the camp was deserted, or as soon as night again placed her impenetrable seal of obscurity upon the landscape.

On inspecting the locality where the disaster had taken place, an indentation in the soil was discovered, where several pools of coagulated blood were found, the sand around them being scratched up, while tufts of grass torn from their roots in the ground lay scattered about, and the only spoor in the immediate vicinity was that unquestionably of the old warrior on whom I had opened fire.

The hunter took up his trail, and, at the distance of half a mile, our foe was detected under the shelter of a mapani bush.

Poor brute, it was evident that he was sick unto death ; still, his heart was willing for the fight,

though his body was weak in power to assist him. On perceiving our advance, with a determined effort, he gained his legs and faced us, his countenance as plainly as language spoken showing that surrender was not intended without a final effort.

I fear I was prompted by too many feelings of revenge to appreciate the noble sight the discomfited foe presented; but what wonder? Had I not lost three of my best draught cattle?—a loss, the magnitude of which can scarcely be understood except by those who have been placed in similar positions. The gallant beast's head was down, his lips curled upwards, so as to show his formidable teeth, while his tail, as stiff and straight as a crow-bar, was erect. If he had now possessed the power, he would have charged; as it was, he remained as splendid a target as the most fastidious marksman could desire. I aimed between his eyes, and, ere the smoke had drifted away from the muzzle of my smooth-bore, the hero lay extended at length upon the sparsely covered veldt. While admiring my prize, three Makalakas (vassals of the Matabele) approached me; the grin upon their countenances showed that they had something unusual to tell, or else something to dispose of. I was not long detained in doubt which it was; for from under a kaross two of their number produced each a lion cub, about the size of a six-months-old kitten. While admiring the little beauties, who seemed in no way to feel the

awkwardness of their position, a roar was heard in the distance, which caused the Makalakas to pick up their treasures and rapidly gain a position behind William and myself. "By gum," exclaimed my henchman, "here comes ma!" And scarcely had he delivered his brief assertion than her ladyship made her appearance, trotting hastily towards us. When seventy or eighty yards off, she halted and uttered a suppressed growl, different in intonation from any that I had ever heard emanate from any of her family. Up to this time the little wee beasties had been models of propriety, but the voice of their dam had in a moment transformed them into fiends incarnate, for they scratched and bit their possessors with such determination and energy, at the same time squealing, that the Makalakas were fain to crush them on the ground the better to enable them to retain their possession. The three natives had a busy time of it in accomplishing their purpose, but William and I had other and more important matters to attend to, for the moment the lioness heard the screams of her offspring, she charged upon us, open-mouthed and almost flying with velocity.

My first shot staggered her and brought her to the ground, but in an instant she regained her feet, and, nothing daunted by the check she had received, continued her headlong course. Again I pulled the trigger, and down she fell, her shoulder smashed, for her left foreleg dangled and doubled under her

as if deprived of joints ; but a three-legged lioness is not incapable of doing mischief ; and so William thought, for at only a few paces he administered the *coup-de-grâce*, aimed in the region of the ear, which put a favourable termination to a short but very exciting scene.

My new acquaintances, the Makalakas, I learnt, were herdsmen of Lubengulo, king of the Matabeles, who, when driving their cattle up to kraal them for the night, disturbed a lioness ; a Bushman who was with them fired a poisoned arrow at her, which, it was believed, had taken effect. As a scratch from one of these pigmy weapons is almost certain to produce death in a few hours, my new friends had gone at dawn to search for their anticipated prey, but, losing the spoor and making sundry efforts to regain it, they unexpectedly discovered the youngsters in a hole scooped in the bank of a dry watercourse, and they at once appropriated them.

It was fortunate they encountered us when they did, or *Madame la Mère* would have made them regret their temerity. On examining the lioness, no indication was to be seen that she had been struck by the arrow of the Bushman ; either the bowman had missed her, or this was not the animal he had shot at. A couple of pounds of gunpowder and four bars of lead were treasures too valuable for natives to refuse, so Leo and Juno became my property. The herdsmen, not satisfied with the

discovery that the killed lioness was not wounded with the Bushman's arrow, renewed their search ; and in the course of the day, on their return to their kraals, passed my encampment bearing a newly taken hide, satisfactory evidence of the rapid and fearful certainty of the virus with which they anoint the points of their diminutive weapons.

There are several poisons in use among the aboriginal tribes of Southern Africa, but that extracted from a caterpillar, and designated by the natives "mangue," is the most fatal. The pain which all the victims suffer who have been inoculated with it must be fearful indeed ; but it is not long endured, for two or three hours generally put an end to the stricken animal's existence. Of course, this time is more or less protracted from the size of the wound, the locality in which it is situated, and the quantity of the venom injected ; for instance, on one of the tributaries of the Zambesi, a lioness that had been wounded at sundown did not expire till the following daybreak, during all which time the cries of anguish that she kept repeating told how the poor creature suffered. On examination, this victim of the poisoned arrow only had a slight puncture through the skin close to the flank, but the firmness of the hide had prevented the missile from falling from the wound.

As the habits of semi-barbarous people always possess great interest for me, I trust they do so

for my readers, and I will therefore describe the two other poisons in use among the Bush people, and the manner in which they are employed to serve their purpose.

First, I will advert to the juice of the euphorbia. This is a family of plants all alike foreign to the European eye, although not by any means strictly tropical. Some species possess much more deleterious matter than others, the most deadly being in appearance like a crooked pole with a bunch of long, hard leaves decorating its summit. When employed by the natives for the purpose of poisoning, it is collected in quantities on the margin of a small vley or pond of water, when it is beaten between stones till the necessary quantity of the juice impregnates the water. At night, unconscious game, probably thirsting from the hours they have passed in the sun-dried desert, come to the vley to satisfy their craving for drink, but scarcely have they done so when they become intoxicated, and soon after lie down to sleep the sleep that knows no waking. By this means to death I do not think the victims suffer much pain, for all that I have seen that have been killed in this manner were in the positions they would assume if they had laid down to take their natural rest.

It is strange that this poison is much more injurious to horses, zebras, and quaggas than it is to cloven-hoofed or horned animals. Why I state this

is that while the former will not proceed over half a mile from where they have imbibed the subtle fluid before being incapacitated from going further, the latter will travel many miles ere they drop, if drop they do, for I am convinced that many of these escape death from this poison, although possibly brought very close to it.

Among carnivorous animals, such as lions, leopards, hyænas, dogs, etc., it does not produce death, only stupefies them for the time being; at least, such was my observation in reference to my dogs, when I knew that they had drunk a quantity of the poisoned water. It is to be regretted that the natives should use such a means to secure game, for I know of a whole herd, amounting to over fifty zebras, perishing in one night, although the requirements of the few inhabitants of the district would have been amply supplied by a couple of carcasses, for it must be remembered that in these regions decomposition sets in very rapidly after life becomes extinct.

The third poison used by these most interesting natives, especially the Bushmen, is that taken from the glands of the mamba, cobra, or puff-adder, with which the points of their arrows are thickly coated. Exposure appears to weaken the virus of these reptiles; for, previous to any important hunt taking place, the barbs of their tiny weapons receive a fresh dressing of the baneful fluid. Game killed by al

the above methods is eaten by the human family or *carnivora* without producing any evil effects.

It is customary for us, the inhabitants of civilized countries, to bewail the ignorance of the savage, and shudder when we think of the difficulties that surround his existence. There is no necessity, I can assure my gentle, philanthropic readers, for this; for where game has not been driven off by the white man's weapons, the Bushman is seldom without an abundance of food, and feasts to actual gluttony where one of our countrymen would starve. One reason for this is that the people of these wastes have lived for generations among the wild beasts, and thus are so conversant with their habits that it requires but slight efforts of chicanery on their part to circumvent them.

Our most profound scientists could be taught the natural history of the quadrupeds and birds that inhabit the countries of the Bechuanas and Makalakas by the *bona fide* untutored savage, and it is this knowledge that makes these people so successful as hunters.

No doubt our ancestors, in Druid days, a long time since equalled, if not excelled, the Bushman of the present time in hunting, and, with scant garments, as often as not with none, scoured the plain at racing pace in pursuit of their wounded quarry. But, strange as it may appear, the descendants of the most polished members of society will relapse

again into savagery in the third or fourth generation after commencing the descent, and out-Herod the Bushman or savage in cruelty or barbarity. The building of a house is a slow matter; to pull it down is easily accomplished.

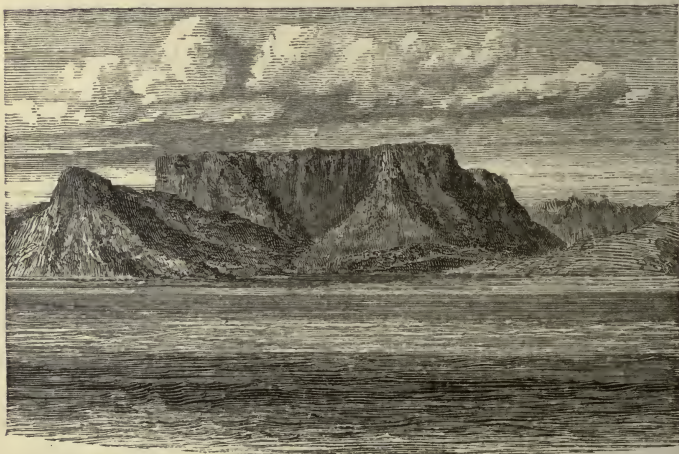


TABLE MOUNTAIN, SOUTH AFRICA.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DANGEROUS BULLOCK—AN IRATE WILD BOAR.

THE moon was later in rising than was expected, so my yarn has become longer than anticipated ; but what a glorious orb she appeared upon presenting herself ! Language would fail to describe her radiance and grandeur as she appeared over those vast table-lands. The moon, wherever seen from this earth, would be supposed to look exactly the same ; but such is not the case in South Africa, for not only does the guardian of the night look double her preconceived size, but her radiance seems increased many fold also. To read ordinary type by her light is easy ; to distinguish the hours on your watch not difficult ; and I have before now, in that country, sewn on a button or mended a rent in my clothes by her rays, without the assistance of lamp or candle.

No wonder the Kaffirs and all other primitive races worship the moon on her first reappearance after a period of absence ; for through her light they recognize immunity from the attacks of hostile races

upon their stations, and safety for their cattle from the depredations of the flesh-eaters of the forest.

In every team of treck oxen that I have known there always is a *bête noir*, a beast that gives more trouble than all the others put together, so no one will learn with surprise that I then possessed such a plague. Often has this brute's conduct tempted me to shoot him, and from taking such a step I only desisted by remembering that he was a willing and powerful animal to pull when once secured in the yoke. This ox was an ugly beast to look at, of a mousey-black colour, unevenly shaped horns, the one hanging down and pointing forward, the other projecting at right angles from the side of the head. This formation of his natural weapons made him particularly dangerous to the natives when he was on the rampage, and well they knew it, for he invariably received a wide berth from all of them until he could be cornered, and the leading rheim made fast to the beast's most unornamental pair of horns. Well, Master Ackerman, for every ox has a name, had been chased all over the place for about ten minutes, till, finding his pursuers were not to be outdone, he took refuge between one of the after bullocks and my waggon. He could not go forward on account of the dissel-boom; to retire was impossible, from the jamboks that assailed his flank and rear, so, making a virtue of necessity, the refractory creature allowed himself to be lassoed.

When thus secured, he never made an attempt at resistance, but with the utmost submission was led to his allotted place in the team, all the time behaving as the most submissive, willing, and good-tempered of servitors. While this *fracas* had been going on the camp-fires had become scattered and almost extinguished, so the absence of the dogs was not noticed, but presently there arose on the stillness of the night a diabolical clamour of angry throats, proclaiming that every cur had a voice in the disturbance. We supposed the cause of this din to be the discovery of a porcupine or an ant-bear, so all went on with their respective occupations. However, this was not for long, for soon a rush was made in our direction, and something almost as big as a donkey passed by my side, upset a nigger, almost ricocheted off Ackerman, and, as rapidly as it had made its appearance, disappeared into the heavy shadows afforded by some adjoining trees. With stentorian lungs, every hound followed in close pursuit, vowing vengeance, and the violence they would do the enemy the moment they were able to overtake him. Ackerman, child of the evil one, concocter of mischief, rebellious offspring of an impure mother (terms addressed to him by my attendants), took advantage of the disturbance, made a dash forward, broke his rheim, and in a moment was "cavorting" free over the veldt. Loud and deep were the curses now hurled at him by

every one who had previously assisted at his capture; but a black man does not, fortunately, cease action because he must swear, so all were soon again in pursuit of the recusant ox. The chase this time was both longer and more difficult than the previous one had been, but it was followed up perseveringly till rewarded with success.

All being now in readiness, the whips cracked, the drivers shouted "*Amaga treck!*" and the ships of the desert were once more in motion.

Now I had time to compare notes and inquire what our assailant had been, for up to this time I was ignorant on the point, the creature having passed me so suddenly and unexpectedly that I never got a fair sight of it. Not so with my attendants; unanimously they pronounced the animal to be a *bosch-vaark*, or bush-pig. The *voorlooper* (leader), who had been knocked over, I therefore naturally concluded must be cut, for the reason that these swine use their tusks with terrible effect; but such was not the case. The hog had never touched him, his fall being attributable to a dog having attempted to pass between his very bandy and unsymmetrical legs.

Chummy and I, having seen that nothing was left behind, now lit our pipes at a smouldering coal, and hurried on to overtake the cavalcade, slowly progressing nearly half a mile in our front. The landscape was thoroughly African, and, to me, more



VLACKE VAARK (*Phacochoerus Aethiopicus*).

attractive on that account. In front, about two hours' trek distant, was a long range of low hills, with those flat tops peculiarly characteristic of this part of the earth, while scattered around at various, but generally considerable distances apart, stood single or small groups of mimosa trees, which distribution ever gives a particularly park-like appearance to the picture. A Cape waggon at such times appears wonderfully attractive ; slowly, evenly, and silently it glides on, the snow-white canvas tilt resembling an iceberg in a becalmed green and yellow sea. Now and again is heard the driver's voice, shouting words of encouragement or reproof to the long double string of toiling cattle, while the powerful whip at frequent intervals produces its rifle-like report, causing the echoes to emit answers resembling a volley fired from numerous revolvers. But the greatest attraction of all was the grand, wondrous, and enthralling moon, now several hours high, surrounded by a setting of the most transparent azure that imagination can conceive. Not a cloud, nay, not a film of a cloud, was to be seen whichever "airt" you gazed, so that to surmise a change of weather would be the very last idea that could possibly find place in the imagination of the greatest pessimist.

Putting on an extra pace, we soon passed our belongings and took the lead. This is the place of honour when not riding—so, at least, it is considered

by the Boer bass. I differ from them, for the place of honour should ever be the place of danger ; and certainly the advance guard is not, upon occasions such as this, where attack is to be apprehended from the wild animals of the forest. I never knew of an ox being pulled down by a lion when in the yoke trekking. I have heard of such things occurring, but I am convinced that they are very few and far between ; so the careful traveller will ever do well to see that all his loose beasts, whether horses, hounds, cattle, or sheep, precede the waggons. If this advice be neglected, disaster may assuredly be apprehended.

On the Notowani river, a friend and shooting companion lost a most valuable "saulted" horse through the natives having forgotten this precaution ; but there was some excuse for their dereliction of duty. It was in this way: to get to the river named, long forced marches had been made ; on reaching it, of course it had at once to be forded, for no interior trader fails to do this, in case a flood should take place during the night, and his advance in consequence be delayed for an unknown time. My waggon got safely over the "drift," being light, but my friend's stuck hard and fast in its centre. To assist the driver, and encourage the bullocks to renewed exertions, the herds deserted the loose animals, who doubtless commenced to feed upon the succulent grasses that abounded upon the stream's

moist margin. In a few minutes a roar was heard ; it announced that my friend had lost one of the most valuable horses in the country, and that the lions had obtained an ample meal of their favourite food.



DURBAN BAY, FROM BEREÄ.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR BATTERY—A TROPICAL STORM.

As the night was cool, and a nice invigorating breeze had sprung up, after a short outspan, we resolved to renew our journey, but as we had tramped as far as inclination prompted us, both adjourned to my conveyance to inspect some of our heretofore unpacked armanent, in case chafing should have occurred to any of the guns through the oscillation or swing of the waggon-box. Fortunately we had not suffered in this respect, although each weapon had been inspected by the custom-house officers at Port Elizabeth, and they or their employers could scarcely be expected to return our treasures to their cases with the same care as had been bestowed upon them by their respective makers.

My ship of the desert was very snug inside, comfortable, and far from unattractive in fine weather, so we dawdled in our occupation. If the reader likes, we will admit him into our confidence; for if, at some future period, he should wish to do the same, he may derive some knowledge which may

enable him the better to face the dangers that must ever beset the traveller, sportsman, or explorer in unfrequented portions of the earth.

Altogether we have seventeen stand of arms, for our attendants want weapons as well as ourselves as soon as we get into the big-game veldt, and breakages will occur. They are divided as follows:—

1. Four double Express central-fire breech-loading rifles of .450 calibre.

2. Four smooth double guns, 10-bore, made purposely for shooting ball, and weighing nearly 10 lb. each.

3. Two smooth double guns, 8-bore, made specially for shooting ball, and weighing nearly 16 lb. each.

4. Four Martini - Henry rifles, Government calibre, stocked for sporting purposes.

5. One single smooth central-fire 4-bore, made expressly for shooting ball, weight about 16 lb.

6. Two 10-bore shot guns, left barrel of each considerably choked.

“What an enormous battery!” I hear many exclaim in astonishment; but it must be remembered that the period of our absence was uncertain, mishaps are always on the *tapis* where no repairs can be obtained, and lastly, that it would be a most disagreeable *contretemps* to be brought to a standstill in a country overflowing with game for the want of a weapon in perfect repair.

The uses to which each weapon was intended to be put were—No. 1, with hollow bullets, for large carnivoræ and big antelopes. This is the prince of weapons for such work, as they are seldom called upon to perform at over two hundred yards. I am quite aware they do a terrible lot of damage to edible game that is required to be cut up into attractive joints; but in this country such is not deemed necessary, and, however mangled any portion of a beast may become from the smashing up of the bullet, it in no way prevents your attendants from enjoying it as food. Moreover, losing wounded game, when struck with this projectile, is reduced to a minimum—no unimportant thing, when, through circumstances that are unavoidable, you are reduced to short commons. For lions and such like, a 450 Express, with a hollow bullet, if held straight, is simply destruction.

No. 2 is a good all-round gun, with eight drachms of powder behind a spherical ball. With it you can stop an elephant at sixty or seventy paces, or tumble over a giraffe or buffalo at nearly double that distance. It can be bored to shoot very accurately up to a hundred and twenty yards, and with some certainty of precision up to two hundred. As the recoil is considerable with the above arm so loaded, the anti-recoil pads, made by Messrs. Silver and Co., of Cornhill, will be found most valuable; but particular care must be taken in

their fitting that the stock is not unnecessarily lengthened.

Nos. 3 and 5 are simply more smashing weapons than No. 2. The charge for the first is about 11 drachms; for the last about as much more as you like to put in it. I have constantly used one of the No. 3, but I do not think their execution makes up for the additional weight that they inflict upon you, particularly in a rough country, and exposed to a tropical sun. No. 5 I have fired; it was some years ago; still I continue to be obstinate enough to adhere to the resolution then taken, viz., "Never no more for me." I have found them act beneficially upon rebellious servants, when allowed no other weapon to shoot with. A very objectionable white man once deprived me of his company (?) because I would spare him no other weapon. Thus it will be seen that a 4-bore has some advantages that the previously mentioned do not possess. Twenty-six inch barrels are quite long enough for the 4 and 8-bores. With the 10-bores 28-inch barrels have given me the best results. This is probably because more accuracy is expected from them, as they will not unfrequently be used upon comparatively small game, at longer ranges than the larger guns would be.

No. 4. The Martini-Henry rifles are always useful weapons, but more especially do they show their excellence upon large flats free from trees

and brush, where game will often be found very wild, and 400-yard shots have to be made. They have, nevertheless, one great objection in a sandy country, an objection that I wrote of years ago, viz., that the fine particles frequently incapacitate the ejector from performing its duty and the block from falling.

No. 6. The last, thank Goodness, on the list require no comments further than that they are wanted to keep the pot supplied, when change of diet is required, or when kooran, wild-fowl, dikop, and sand-grouse are only to be obtained. Why I prefer a 10-bore is that I became accustomed to the size in America; further, I will add, in spite of the heresy that many English sportsmen will think I commit by doing so, that I have ever got such superior shooting from a 10-bore over a 12-bore, that the additional weight that I carried was more than counterbalanced by the results. A further consideration should be added before closing my comments on my battery, and that no unimportant one, viz., that the same shells and wads fitted my favourite ball guns that were used in the shot ones.

But the treck had suddenly come to an end, and big drops of rain were resounding off the tight tilt of the waggon as if they were falling upon a drum. In a moment we were both out of our sanctuary to inquire the cause, but there was no need to ask

questions ; the moon was totally obscured, and thorough blackness surrounded us ; such darkness, so dense in its intensity, that I almost thought that I could feel its pressure. But this was only momentary. Lightning, in a dozen forked tongues, eye-blinding in its dazzling brilliancy, descended to earth, revealing the course that each flash had taken, and the numerous acute angles and deviations that it had made in its course.

There was a tope of acacia near us, and we made for it, when my voice, rather a strong one, and, therefore, on such occasions useful, shouted out the requisite orders for making all snug ere the promised storm should break upon us.

My people knew their work, and zealously performed it. In a few minutes the cattle were all released from their yokes ; the sail, an immense sheet of greased canvas, was passed over each waggon and made fast by rheims to the spokes and felloes of the wheels, and large fires were lighted before and behind our camping-place. No need for tying up the bullocks that night ; they were too tired to wander, and we scarcely expected that we had advanced far enough into the bowels of the land for the king of beasts to pay us a visit and drive them off. During the flashes of lightning you could see that half of the oxen had already lain down, and among their number were Ackerman and Gilbert, the leading spirits when mischief was

contemplated, so you might rest assured that all would be found close by when day broke. The horses were not so submissive, although they were between the waggons; the vivid flashes seemed to frighten them beyond control of human agency, and but for the strength of their halters they would soon have been careering over the veldt. When I say horses, I make a mistake, for there was one notable exception in his conduct to that of the others. It was old Moke, who had his muzzle deep in his nose-bag, and crunch, crunch, crunched his mealies as if the outer world and the disturbances that surrounded him were quite of minor importance as long as he was permitted to uninterruptedly enjoy his repast. If philosophers exist among horses, then that horse was one, for most thoroughly did he believe, and act up to the belief, that it was time enough to discontinue gratifying his appetite when he was prevented from doing so.



BUSHMAN KRAAL.

CHAPTER X.

A DANGEROUS THUNDERSTORM—A DISSATISFIED COOK.

THUNDER does not always accompany lightning, more especially in the tropics, but on this occasion we were not to be deprived of the soul-enthraling, awe-inspiring sound caused by the warring of the elements. At length the great voice spoke. So short and concise was its utterance that all stood aghast. Its emphasis, its power, and its sublimity were such that every one, regardless of colour and creed, were overpowered with dismay. I have frequently stood by the side of the heaviest siege guns and mortars when they have been fired, but they were a bagatelle to the voice of the raging elements. The detonation lasted little more than an instant; but, short as was that time, what terrible force and power of destruction it heralded! For a moment after, all was a death-like stillness, then the echoes took up the thunder roar, and every tree, rock, and hill reverberated with its ironical applause, ha! ha! ha! But, long ere the kloofs, kranzes, and kopjie had ceased their answering song, the heavens

seemed cleft asunder by many a rift of fire, tearing and rending the intense darkness, as if naught but the immolation of the earth would satisfy the craving for destruction of these erratic fiends. The rain, which for a time had ceased, now descended like a cataract, evidently intent upon engulfing what its allies had left uninjured. A dead calm for a breathing space had reigned. Not so now, for the winds rushed forth, tearing and prostrating whatever dared to oppose their progress. Several of the adjoining trees told their downfall by the crash with which they saluted their parent earth, while others groaned and trembled as if supplicating to be spared the fate of their comrades.

It is such an ordeal as this that tests the courage and discipline of a vessel's crew: the present experience tried the material my people were composed of, and, with the exception of our cook, I found all equal to the occasion. When the gale struck the camp, for some seconds I feared that it would overturn the waggons, more especially as the horses attached to them used every effort to rend themselves free; and great must have been the breakage and loss of property if such a *contretemps* had taken place. So it became necessary, for their sake as well as mine, that they should be released. I shouted for the Totty and Zulu, for all, every one, to assist me in the task I had allotted myself, which was far from free from very many elements of danger; and,

in a moment, they were by my side, emulating each other in their zeal, energy and courage to follow my example. The job was not a long one, for the rheims that did the duties of halter ropes were secured with slip-knots, one pull on which undid them. But we dare not now turn the horses loose, or they would have stampeded, and to hold them would have required the united strength of the whole party, who, being needed for other important purposes, could not be spared, so I tied their heads together, with little more than a foot of halter between the muzzle of each, and thus successfully put a stop to any proclivities for straying. Happily, animals under such circumstances can never make up their minds to work in unison, so the desire of one thwarted the intentions of the other. But still the waggons were not yet secure from being upset, and it became necessary to at once prevent such a catastrophe, which can only be done by stretching several storm lines over the tilt of each, and firmly and tautly securing their terminations to stakes or bush roots on both sides. But while all this labour was being gone through, it is not to be imagined that the thunder and lightning had abated, or the hurricane of wind and rain lessened. No such thing; for, momentarily, all seemed to increase in violence, as if the taste for destruction which they had enjoyed caused them to crave for further powers of wreckage.

The third peal of thunder was the most terrible of all, and the lightning which accompanied it excelled in dazzling brilliancy and number of descending streams of fire anything imagination could picture. At one moment the zenith looked a mass of flame, and from that centre radiated, like uncountable spokes of a giant wheel, forked lines of livid electricity.

Of course, by this time my companions and self were wet to the skin; but neither dare take shelter in our waggons, for the amount of iron in their construction would alone have made them dangerously attractive, while the long, brightly worn treck-tows, almost thirty yards in length, and made fast to the body of our conveyances, could not fail to possess no mean power for conducting the lightning to them; and if such a contingency had happened, fed with nearly thirty thousand rounds of ammunition—well, there would not have been much in the morning to pick up worth carrying away. No, we preferred taking our comfort in the open, and so did our people; not that any of us were afraid—oh, no! not in the least.

The wrath of women of tropical climes is terrible, but shortlived. The violence of storms in those latitudes is the same; if you are not killed in the commencement of the outburst, you will probably live to be immolated upon a future occasion. Moreover, when once the climax is reached in both cases

there is a simmering down, gradual at first, but rapidly increasing in velocity, that is far from worthy of the beginning.

Soon the vortex of the storm moved from over us, only changing its *venue* by slow degrees, till some space severed us ; when, as if ashamed of its turbulence, with ever-increasing rapidity of stride, with redoubled energy, it hurried from our locality. Still for an hour or more I heard the storm in the distance, away over the hills that lay in our front ; and I fear I rejoiced as I thought they were feeling its violence, for had not they derided us with their echoing, when we, unsheltered, were enduring its giant force ?

Soon after, the moon came out, unclouded and brilliant, gazing down upon us with her serene, comforting face, as if she desired to assure us that we were not forgotten, and that her subdued, enchanting light was lovingly tendered us as an offering of peace, sympathy, and goodwill, for the manifold dangers and discomforts we had suffered from her rash and violent neighbours aloft.

In my numerous wanderings, whether they have been where cyclones devastate the ocean, or hurricanes prostrate the forest, or typhoons strew the seas with wreckage and mangled human remains, I never remember the warring of the elements to be so destructive and awe-inspiring, as upon these table-lands of South Africa. To admire their sub-

limity and grandeur no one can fail, but to deny being impressed with our utter insignificance and the power of the great Creator is impossible.

I have known persons who boasted of their atheism, their contempt of danger, and their disregard of death become blanched in the face in one of these storms which I have attempted to describe, from their knowledge of their proximity to destruction, and their whole nervous system disorganized from fear.

The horses had scarcely moved from where they had been left; the bullocks, drenched, remained where they had lain down, unwearingly chewing their cud, while many of the dogs came forth from underneath the waggons and bow-wowed a welcome on our return to them. All were happy now, unless guzzling, over-fed cookey, who never ceased lamenting that he had not been warned of the danger he had run of being blown to atoms, by seeking shelter under the waggons. Some men would have rejoiced at their escape from such imminent danger; not so with this fat porpoise, he ever had or made a grievance, and nursed the poor thing till it was threadbare or worn out.

CHAPTER XI.

WILD PIGS—AN EXCITING HUNT.

It was late before we trecked, and then only accomplished a distance of five or six miles, for we came across a splendid pool of rain-water among the hills, that was too attractive not to outspan beside.

The air during our march was most invigorating and free from dust, the bush as bright and green as if just supplied with fresh foliage, while the birds and smaller antelopes frisked about as if a new life, and one of eternal pleasure, already appeared before them.

The country we had got into was far more undulating than previously, and another characteristic, both pleasant to the eye and prophetic of sport, was that it was well covered in parts with large spaces of dwarf brushwood.

Having ordered a lavish dinner at sunset, I perched myself on the waggon-box and took a survey of the surrounding country with my binocular. At almost the first glance I took through it, the

focus lit upon some animals I could not exactly make out. I called up Totty to my assistance, and requested information. His bleary eyes, which always had a smoke-dried colour about them, and, therefore, did not look as if they were of much use, immediately informed me that they were *bosch-vaarkes* (bush pigs). This I could scarcely believe, for they looked to me almost as large as buffaloes; but these they could not be, so I accepted my attendant's assertion; more especially did I do so without cavil, for there was at the time a very perceptible mirage on the horizon.

A further view of the ground where the game was gave me the impression that it was excellent galloping, so I armed myself with a hog-spear, determined, if possible, to prove what can be done in this part of the world in pig-sticking.

We mustered quite a numerous band, for some Bakalihari had joined us. The anticipated sport put all in good temper, so no end of chaff was being indulged in, no small amount of which was aimed at me, and the weapon with which I was furnished. The Hottentot felt its edge, and grinned, and, I suppose, winked at his companions, for all tittered; but when the Zulu remarked, it was what they killed sea-cows and elephants with in his country, the titter became a most unmistakable laugh.

Fearing that the dogs might get injured in hunting our intended game, I ordered all to be tied up;

a proceeding which each resented by howling in the most discordant manner.

The *red-skimmel* (roan) mare, which I selected for my riding, was fresh as paint, but well-mannered, so I felt reason to anticipate sport of the first water.

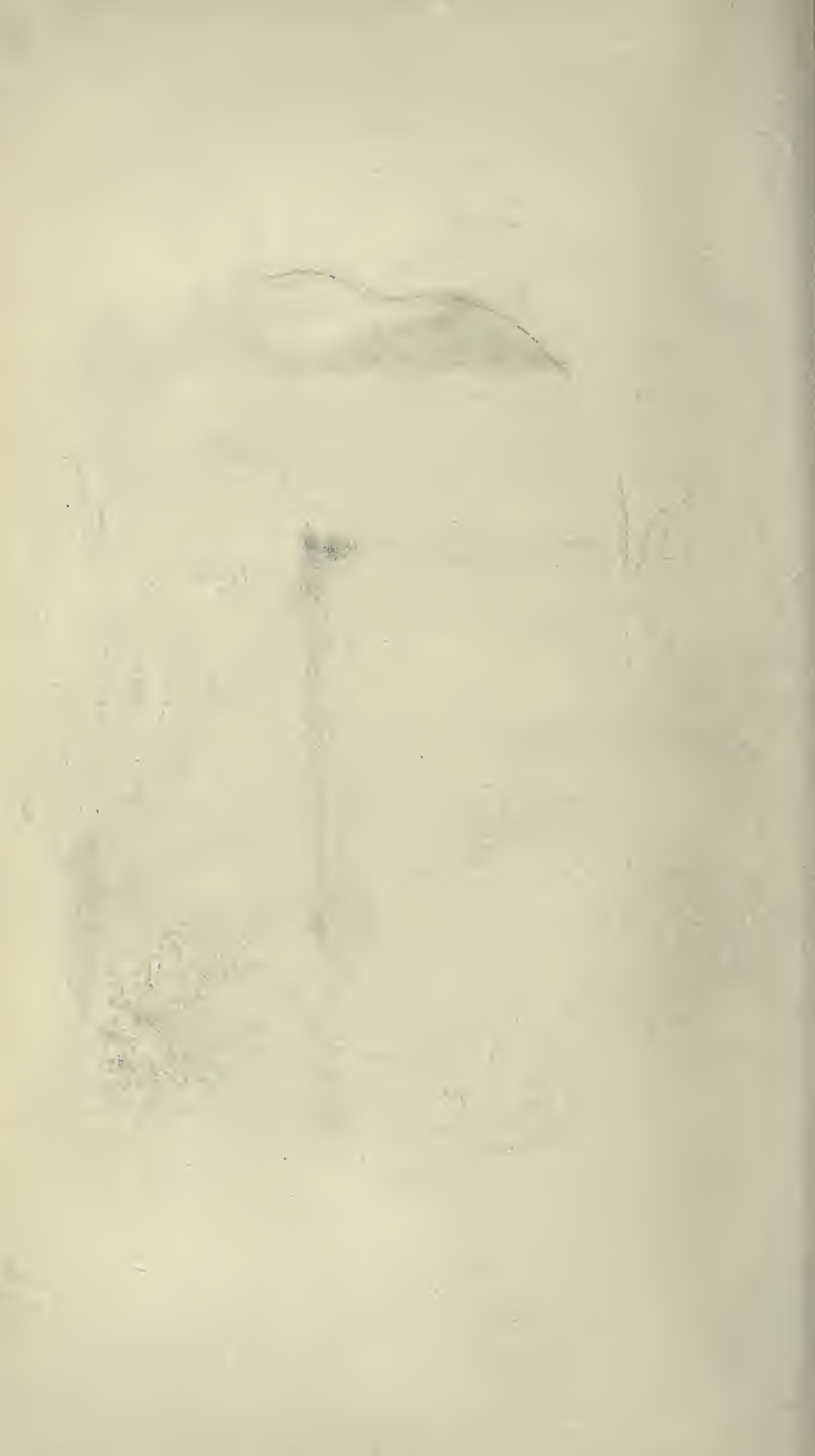
When we had gone half a mile, a halt was proposed, to enable two of the Bakalihari to go forward and reconnoitre. This was acceded to, and in ten minutes they returned. Then followed a short consultation, the result of which was that four of the party were despatched to stop with brush some earths known to exist in a neighbouring hollow, and for which the game was expected to make. This detachment was given about twenty minutes to perform their work, when the advance commenced. My mare, evidently aware that something was on the *tapis*, now became very fidgety, and evinced strong anxiety to take the lead, but by a little judicious handling of her mouth, and some soothing language, I managed to keep her thirty or forty paces in rear of the dusky natives. Every moment I expected to get a view of the quarry, when, confound it, with a rush like a hawk striking its prey, Arrack, who had slipped his collar, passed me; but this was not all I had to complain of, for not very far in rear I could hear the deep voice of Old Bull, another hound that had done the same, bassly proclaiming that he was running my spoor. Arrack set the example of rushing in, the darkies ran after

him, and I after them; not an instant too soon, either, for there were the swine, seven in number, following one another at their best pace. The leader of the string was a slab-sided old sow; five youngsters about half-grown came after; while paterfamilias, a sturdy, irascible old gentleman, ever casting a glance behind him, brought up the rear, and within fifty yards of his stern was my much-valued hound. Visions of a disembowelled dog floated before me, and that dog the favourite of all my pack, but, as I could not alter circumstances, I had to endure them; so, rising in my stirrups, and giving a yell like a lunatic Comanche, I put the mare at her best pace and made for the veteran boar. He being the last, I thought, of course, Arrack would devote his attention to him; but in this I was much mistaken, the dog preferred young pork to old, or an easy victory to a hard-fought battle, so singled out a squeaker. With much satisfaction I recognized his sagacity.

By this time I was only a few strides from my intended victim, my mount going well within herself, and evidently willing to take me alongside the game, so I called upon her for a little more speed, which she responded to; the result of which was nearly to bring me within striking distance of the boar, and to turn him off at right angles from the course his wife and children had pursued.

At this moment I heard a most unearthly





screaming. "Arrack has got one of the youngsters by the ear," I mentally exclaimed, and pushed after my game. Again I made an effort to run alongside the hog; but, to my surprise, the old scoundrel had been "playing 'possum" all this time, and making a waiting race of it; for, the instant I was rising in my stirrups to job the beast, he stretched himself out to a gallop that was so fast that well I knew, if he kept it up, it would be more than my mare could do to overhaul him.

However, the boar was fat, and consequently not in the best of training; so, after a spurt of a few hundred yards, he commenced moderating his gait. At this time he looked very savage, his wicked pigmy left eye ever and again casting back a vindictive glance. This I could see, for I was riding a trifle wide of the quarry.

Foam now commenced to drop in constant flakes from the boar's mouth, a pretty good indication that the beast was tolerably pumped; so, getting my mount well in hand, I rushed her at him, and as I shot past, reached over and delivered a severe stab. The thrust was intended for the top of the shoulder-blade; but, however excellent my intention, I did not succeed in it, but merely inflicted a long and ugly flesh wound in the foe's flank. This thrust, however, had the effect of changing the boar's course for the direction the other members of his family had taken, doubtless with the object of

gaining his sanctuary in the ground, so I determined to bring matters to a crisis. A hundred yards or more brought me close up to my game's stern, when a prick of the spurs shot me alongside, but I misplaced my steel quite as ignominiously as I had done previously; the result upon the foe, however, was different; instead of retreating, he turned resolutely to bay. The mare did not like this proceeding, so obstinately refused to charge; thus, then and there, I had a battle with her, but, in spite of spur and voice, I could not get my roan closer than eight or ten paces of the hog. I futilely lost a good five minutes at this work, and probably would have lost as many more if allowed, when, with a dash, the boar charged me, apparently went through between my nag's legs, who gave a jump at the same moment, higher by many degrees than ever she had done before to my knowledge, and the grizzly old warrior was again going his best pace in the direction of his sanctuary.

I did not wait to examine whether my horse was cut; I was too wroth 'to consider or act as I ought to have done upon such an occasion. Thus I did not let the grass grow under the mare's feet, but at her best pace rattled her down hill, took a pull on her head over the flat to steady her, and was just about to make another rush when the hog sprang forward over a *donga* (a sun-crack in the ground).

Knowing it to be an accepted fact that a horse can always jump what a hog does, I rushed the mare at it. I could see it was a pretty wide stretch, but I did not see any more for some minutes, and then saw stars—very numerous and confoundedly erratic ones too! Yes, I had got across; but I made this mistake, that I did not bring my mare with me. This was certainly neglectful on my part; but, to tell the truth, I could not help it.

It was some time before I definitely came to a resolution whether I would remain where I was or ride in search of my companions; but, to perform the latter, it was necessary to know whether I had an animal that could carry me. It is wonderful with what indifference I set about gaining this information. One horse more or less did not appear worth thinking about; so I confess that I did not trouble myself very much over the matter. However, I was awoke from this happy lethargic state of indifference by seeing the red-skimmel using her utmost exertions to clamber out of the bowels of the earth and gain a more satisfactory view of the country than is to be obtained seven or eight feet underground. Without difficulty I captured my beast; but, having accomplished that feat, it is wonderful how careless I felt about getting into the saddle. In fact, I may confess it, I had come a tremendous fall, and, although no bones were broken, I was nearly sufficiently shaken up to be made into an omelette.

As soon as I could pull myself together, I learned that my people had enjoyed themselves thoroughly, killed two of the squeakers, and had nearly got ripped by the old boar, who had ultimately made good his retreat into his burrow.

“Love your enemies” is a precept often quoted, but, I fear, seldom adopted. I cannot say that I love that old boar, but I certainly respect him—you know, a man can scarcely be expected to love a pig—yet I hope he will live to a green old age, and be father of a numerous progeny as fleet, as game, and as resolute as their progenitor.



MIDDAY HALT.

CHAPTER XII.

PUFF-ADDERS—THE STRENGTH OF THEIR POISON.

ALTHOUGH the fall I experienced in pursuit of the bush-pig was anything but a joke, I felt no further inconvenience from it, than being a little stiff in the morning, and as for the mare, she appeared to be in no way affected by the *contretemps*, for she not only greedily emptied her nose-bag that night, but looked on the morrow fit to go for a man's life. Nobody in Africa appears to suffer from such accidents. It is fortunate they do not, for so frequent are they that, if the result were otherwise, the colony would soon become depopulated.

I have noticed the same in India—in India in the good old days when John Company was king. The subalterns of that time were not like those that are to be found in that sunny region now. I do not write from *malice prepense*, but from the personal experience of others as well as that of myself.

Just before the mutiny occurred, I saw many a youngster, when a sounder of hogs was reported in the vicinity of camp, go in pursuit of them

bare-backed, in preference to waiting for his horse being saddled. Further, I could name many an old acquaintance who invariably rode, except when travelling, on naught but a blanket with a surcingle passed round it.

The young colonists of the Cape of the present day remind me much of those dashing, gallant youths, whose numbers were so awfully thinned by Nana Sahib and his followers. But this does not account for my having come off scatheless after my fall; therefore, I must accredit it to luck, for I did not then ride one ounce under fourteen stone.

Soon after breakfast I took a stroll, more with the intention of botanical research than to kill animal life; still, I had my rifle with me; for, know, reader, in this part of the world it should always be your nearest, if not dearest, friend. I found flowering verbenas of different colours abundant, and had soon collected a choice assortment of this charming blossom, for it has ever been to me a prime favourite. This doubtless arises from the circumstance that my father's garden in my boyhood's days was celebrated for their production, and neither time nor trouble was spared by the indulgent parent and the old gardener in bringing them to the greatest perfection. "Like father, like son;" so, with insatiable appetite and unwearied energy, I searched far and near for a new variety of verberna to add to my collection. A pile of detached stones stood before me,

overgrown with wondrous parasites, gorgeous in colour, luxuriant in a superabundance of foliage; behind it, on the shadow side, where there must have been protection from the sun during all but the midday hours, I expected to find a prize. With anxious and keen eye I looked over the barrier for some minutes, yet I saw not what I sought, but at length, by slow degrees, became convinced that I was gazing upon something gifted with life and also powers of motion. Concentrating all my powers of vision upon the unknown object, I was not long in defining what it was. The ground, although not bare, still was not sufficiently densely covered with herbage to prevent me distinctly observing the length and breadth of a very large puff-adder. I have seen many of these loathsome reptiles, for on the southern edge of tropical South Africa they are in some localities very abundant, but I much doubt if I had ever observed one of such large proportions. From the stealthy, slow way that the snake moved forward, I deemed that it was not alarmed, but in pursuit of prey, so I steadily gazed in front of its course, to learn, if possible, what was its intended victim. For some time my effort was unrewarded, but ultimately I discerned two sand-grouse (*Namaqua partridge*) dusting themselves in a little indentation they had scratched in the soil, which, from their manner, were obviously alike ignorant of my intrusion or their enemy's proximity. Poor little beauties,

it would have been charity to frighten them, and so caused them to wing their way to some place of greater security ; but I did not do so, the better to learn the ways and artifices of a creature alike dreaded by man and beast.

Has a snake the power of scenting its prey ? I never heard this point mooted, but from what I noted on this occasion I believe it has. The birds were directly to windward of the reptile, and with unerring instinct it directed its course for them ; it could not see its prey, for its head never appeared to rise above an inch from the ground. At length the puff-adder was within a couple of feet of the game ; slowly and imperceptibly its body was drawn up into a coil, of which the head appeared the centre, when, with a dart as sudden as it was swift, it threw itself forward. One of the sand-grouse, on rapid pinions, sought safety in flight ; the other for some seconds ineffectually flapped its wings, as if struggling to escape, for it was in the grasp of the enemy ; but soon these efforts ceased, and all was still.

I doubt not that the bird was poisoned by its destroyer's fangs, or why should death have come so rapidly, for there was no crushing process adopted by the foe by enveloping the body with repeated folds ?

Many a person doubts that poisonous reptiles inject their virus into the animal they seize with the intention of feeding upon. For my part, I do

not see how it could be otherwise, for the supply of this noxious fluid is stored at the root of the fangs, and requires but the slightest pressure to force it through the orifices in the canine teeth into whatever they lay hold of.

This puff-adder, which I killed just as it was about to commence its meal, was almost four feet long, and quite as thick round the centre of the body as the upper part of my arm. I did not, on this occasion, as the reader will observe, wait to see the serpent swallow its prey, for I had so often been a witness of that process that I did not consider a renewed exhibition of the disgusting sight worthy of the loss of time. However, I will describe how the operation is performed, for the benefit of those who have not had the opportunities of witnessing these details of animal life which have been afforded me. The apex of the jaws of all snakes possesses a kind of cartilaginous hinge, enabling each side to act, to a certain extent, independently of the other; the terminations of the teeth, which all point inwards towards the throat, are thus enabled in rotation to take a further grip of the prey, which being constantly repeated, ultimately passes the victim through the mouth into the throat, in the end, to be sucked into the body by muscular action. This process is pleasanter to describe than to witness; at least, in my opinion. That all do not think alike on this point can easily be learned by paying a visit to the reptile-house at the

Zoological Gardens, when numbers of cold-blooded wretches will be heard expressing their desire to witness a timid, almost-frightened-to-death pigeon or rabbit meet its untimely end in the folds of a boa-constrictor.

While my people were trekking for the next water, which I was informed would have to be drawn out of pits sunk some distance beneath the surface of the soil, I took my bay horse and made a wide detour, with the double view of getting acquainted with the country and a knowledge of what game was to be found in the vicinity. Soon I discovered that information on the latter point was not likely to be obtained, for the brushwood, far and near, had been trampled down and torn off by herds of innumerable cattle. After having ridden close on a dozen miles, I found a vley, rocky and precipitous on one side, but tramped into a perfect quagmire on the reverse. Here were several Bakalihar, one of whom could speak a little English from him I learned that the immense droves which were now passing and repassing to and from this watering-place were the property of Monkoroane Montsioa, and adjoining chiefs, and which had been driven thus far to the westward to prevent their being seized or "jumped" by the hordes of free booting Boers at that time carrying on a war of annexation and extermination against all those natives who had remained loyal to the British.

crown after our disasters in the Transvaal. I am convinced that during the hour I remained by this piece of water not less than several thousand head of cattle were driven up to drink. Among such a drove, as may be imagined, there was a wonderful variety of breeds, the big-horned, awkward, raw-boned Lake Ngami animals predominating. Still, these beasts have their value, as they can stand being deprived of water with impunity when trekking across the *doorst-land* (thirst-land), when better-looking animals would unquestionably perish. The spread of the horns of these Ngami cattle from point to point is sometimes amazing, ten feet and a half being no uncommon measurement. But it is not to be supposed that all the component parts of this drove were equally ungainly, for in its ranks were to be found Zulu, Mashoona, and Fatherland oxen and kine, many of them sufficiently handsome to please the eye of the most fastidious connoisseur.

I learned from a herdsman that lung-sickness was extremely prevalent among his charges, and that the losses had not unfrequently amounted to eight or ten head a day. This disease, known by scientists as pleuro-pneumonia, is the curse of the stock-raiser who is settled to the north of the colony; in fact, but for its ravages, fortunes would be too easily made by pastoral farmers. Many people believe that it can be cured by inoculation, an operation generally performed by inserting some

of the virus under the skin of the tail, when frequently that appendage rots and falls off. When this occurs to a beast, it is deemed "salted," or impervious to future attacks of this disease.

As far as my experience goes, this is a myth, for as many of my guaranteed "salted" beasts succumbed to lung-sickness as those I had obtained without a warranty. There cannot be a doubt that this portion of Bechuanaland is capable of making magnificent stock farms; and, if the land was not called upon to support an excessive quantity of beeves, the disease of which I have just spoken would, in my belief, die out. At the present time, scarcity of water is the great drawback to this locality; but this need not continue to be so, as I feel convinced that, by sinking wells only a few feet beneath the surface of the soil, an abundant supply of water could be obtained at all seasons of the year.

I had scarcely left my new acquaintances, when I found evidences in abundance of the havoc lung sickness had made, for numerous were the carcasses I found on either hand. So plentiful were they, that I had ceased to take particular notice of them, and thus approached one with a slack rein and thoughts that were of far and distant scenes, when my horse nearly jumped from under me, and but for the aid afforded me by his mane, I unquestionably would have kissed mother earth.

After a struggle, and that not an easy one, I regained my seat, but it took some minutes before I could induce my horse to settle down into the quiet and respectable paces of a well-behaved animal. The reason of our discomforture was that a *vlakke-vaark* (warts-hog) had dashed out of the interior of a dead bullock, where he had been doubtless enjoying a meal on the deceased animal's intestines. I do not think that the hog meant to charge me ; but it was so surprised at my intrusion, and so anxious to escape, that I doubt much if it knew in which direction it was going, so passed close under my horse's nose. This boar was a disgusting sight to look at, as it was quite caked over with offal and blood. It was many a day after this event before I forgot this brute's appearance, and from whence it had emerged. The oath that I registered at the time of making his acquaintance, that I would never again eat a piece of mature *vlakke-vaark*, I have religiously kept.



PUFF-ADDER AND SAND-GROUSE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PET LIONS AND MY BABOON—A FOSTER-MOTHER.

By striking a north-east course, after a canter of a few miles, I perceived the tilts of my waggons, on reaching which I found them outspanned beside the water-pits I have previously alluded to. If I had known the repulsive specimen of humanity that I was to see here, I would have given the place a very wide berth. My reason for saying so is that the man who ladled out the water for the use of the cattle was the most disgusting object upon whom I ever set eyes. I have seen many specimens of the human family in my time, but this one eclipsed all predecessors. In height he stood over six feet, with a chest so enormous that it was out of all proportion to the rest of his body, which otherwise was not badly formed. But no words can describe his skin: where it could be seen, it was as white as the fairest white man's; the greater part of it, however, was disfigured by the most dreadful leprous-looking sores that can be conceived. The

wretch's eyes were pink as a white rabbit's, while the matted wool which grew upon his head was of a light sandy brown colour. Without a vestige of clothes upon his person, he stood in front of us alternately jabbering like a monkey or tearing himself with his talon-like nails. Shocking as this unfortunate creature was to my eyes, he was quite as repulsive to my followers. My Zulu proposed to drive him off and water the cattle ourselves; but this course, I felt convinced, could not have been effected without considerable difficulty, and a fight or struggle with such an afflicted creature would not have redounded to our credit, even if we had been successful; so the cattle were once more hurried into their yokes, and with many a shout and crack of the whip we hastened forward to the next water.

Can any one imagine what a life such an unfortunate as this must lead, despised by all, expatriated from his tribe, afflicted by the most loathsome of diseases, and compelled to obtain a precarious sustenance by whatever means in him lay, and, as a consequence, living from hand to mouth? Such an existence must be the most dreadful that a human being can be condemned to suffer.

But from such a disagreeable subject let us drift to pleasanter themes. So, if the reader will bear with me, while the patient bullocks toil on under the scorching sun and over the heavy sand, I will continue the narrative of my pet lions.

The yell that the mother of Leo and Juno had given utterance to had made its impression, and one evidently not immediately to be forgotten ; for the little beasts fought with teeth and claws with such vindictiveness, that it was not without much difficulty they were conveyed to the camp.

If their conduct had been bad before, it was worse now, for the sight or approach of one of my dogs or oxen immediately drove them into a paroxysm of rage that from its intensity threatened to terminate their lives.

For the better security of my prizes, I had them placed in a large packing-case, the top of which was secured by numerous strong lengths of hoop-iron, to prevent the possibility of the youngsters' escape.

Soon after I sat down to breakfast, and scarcely had I commenced my meal, when I saw my pet baboon stealthily coming along the back of my waggon. Mischievous and curiosity were alike blended in his eye and manner ; so, knowing this gentleman's habits as well as I did my own, without moving, I watched his actions.

The case in which the young lions were secured was evidently the object that he desired to scrutinize, for, whatever had been the last work myself or attendants had been engaged upon, Mr. Baboon ever considered it incumbent on him, immediately we left the scene, to critically inspect our labours

and pass a verdict of approval or otherwise on its execution.

The cubs by this time had become silent, either from depression of spirits or fatigue. Thus "Paul Pry" was unaware what the box contained. Stealthily he laid a hand upon its side, and carefully and gradually raised himself on to the top. This movement aroused the captives, for both simultaneously gave a yell, and the way that baboon jumped and the velocity with which he scuttled into the top of an adjoining tree was truly marvellous. It was quite an hour before the ape recovered his equanimity; not even the sight of our food—for at all meals he was a constant attendant—could induce him to descend from his sanctuary.

All the monkey family are perverse, queer brutes. When present at our meals, my baboon was perfectly amenable to the conventionalities of good society, while a solemn earnestness marked his physiognomy that was quite assuring. But let me be called away from the scene for an instant, and immediately there was mischief. Pots, pans, plates, would be sent flying, often the scalding hash or soup over the back of a dog or the rump of an ox or horse, and the dinner space became the scene of the wildest disorder; while the delinquent, the cause of all this disturbance, what had become of him? Probably he would be found on the top of the tilt of the waggon, chattering and

mumbling to himself, looking so doleful and unhappy that the uninitiated would believe that he was the most aggrieved sufferer from the disturbance and not the promoter.

For two days the young lions would not take food, and even showed themselves disposed to offer violence to the hand that tendered it ; but starvation is a great leveller, and knowing this, I resolved to let them have nothing to eat till they took it rationally and gratefully. The third morning they did so, and rapidly disposed of a quart of milk thickened with meal, to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

A wolf is said to have suckled Romulus and Remus ; the accuracy of this is doubted by many, but of this my readers may be assured, Leo and Juno were suckled by a goat.

Among my camp followers was an aged "Nanny-goat," whose kid was about two weeks old. The child was brutally sentenced to fill the flesh-pots, and its parent, till further orders, told off to perform the unnatural duty of foster-mother.

In my mind it was easy enough to adopt such a scheme, but I soon found that the principals had a strong objection to following it.

The goat became frantic when the cubs were put near her, and they in turn appeared equally frightened when they saw her. So "Nanny" had her legs tied, and her neck and hind-quarters staked to the ground. Still the young lions would not suck ?

At length I made William hold one and then the other, while they in succession submitted to a perfect douche of milk in their faces. The little beasts licked this off with apparent satisfaction, till ultimately the teat was placed in their mouths, and, through pressure of my hand, the milk was forced to flow; so, by a little dexterity, the difficulty was overcome, and both parties settled down to the arrangement with praiseworthy propriety.

After a week, the foster-mother would lick and dress the coats of her charges with as much assiduity as she had formerly exercised over her own child. This advance in feelings of affection was accomplished in this way. Daily, before the babies were nursed, I saturated their coats with the foster-parent's milk, which she afterwards licked off while they were imbibing their nourishment.

For a long time there were no disagreements, and all would have gone on satisfactorily till the end of time, had not my pets increased so rapidly in size that the goat was unable to satisfy their demands. Then the kind-hearted foster-parent, scandalized at the appetite of her putative progeny, would spring to her feet and butt them with no light blows whenever they attempted to suck.

At the time these young lions were obtained they were striped almost as distinctly and regularly as Bengal tigers, but these markings died out soon after I became their possessor. This appears to

me to be a freak of nature worth recording, for I feel certain it is known to few except keepers of zoological gardens or owners of menageries.

As I had several milch cows with my *cortége*, there was no want of milk; and it was surprising what a quantity the little beasts would consume, although mixed with a goodly proportion of porridge made from mealies or Indian corn.

Of course, this diet could not go on for ever; but I was resolved to keep it up as long as possible, before substituting cooked flesh, by this course hoping to overcome their ferocity. I had prohibited any person giving them blood and raw meat, under the threat of suffering from my utmost displeasure; and I have reason to believe my orders were long obeyed.

I had possessed my favourites about two months—for favourites they had truly become, being never spiteful, and ever full of frolic and fun—when they were released, and allowed to enjoy themselves about the camp fire, or obtain shelter from the sun between the waggon wheels, when they were, with one exception, most excellent friends with the dogs. But this was not so much to be wondered at, for all animals associated in this common rendezvous on terms of equality, with the exception of one, and that one was the most unpopular brute, both with man and beast, in the whole camp. Courage and watchfulness were his sole recommendations—good and useful qualities, it must be acknowledged, in

this wild country—therefore his surliness was tolerated. Zulu, for that was his name, was an enormous dog, possessed of great strength, and looked as if he were a cross between a greyhound and a mastiff, but partaking in appearance much more of the former than of the latter. His speed was considerable, but his powers of scent I never saw equalled ; thus the largest antelope, if wounded, could seldom escape him. But when he did secure his prey, it was no easy or trifling matter to take it from him. The natives dare not attempt to do so, and I never did without considerable dread that he would turn on me. Moreover, his power was so great that there was only one effectual course to pursue with Master Zulu, when he had to be removed from the game he had pulled down, that was to choke him. Now, if this formidable hound had turned upon my new pets, at their infantile age, he would soon have made short work of them ; but this, strange to say, he never did, and though by expression and voice, he told them that their room was better than their company, he generally abdicated his resting-place in their favour.

The lions, however, indicated no fear of the dog, so it was not without considerable anxiety I anticipated that a row would some day occur between them. This would have been a sad *contretemps*, for I valued both, and would have been sadly grieved to have either injured or killed.

When I made short marches, changing camp from one position to another, distant perhaps three or four miles, if the route lay through an open country, I on several occasions allowed the lions to go loose. They never at such times evinced the slightest disposition to stray, but followed immediately behind the dogs, who, in turn, followed the horses, and these I kept invariably close up to the rearmost waggon. Now, the dogs would frequently walk abreast of each other—at least, as many of them as the breadth of the track would permit; but the lions never would, the female always going first, and the male following close behind, placing his feet almost exactly in the spoor of his sister. This is evidently a teaching of Nature, for it is invariably adopted by the mature beasts of this race, and why?—to disguise their number, I think, and make the least possible noise in passing through cover.

To further elucidate this matter, one day when I was idle I coupled them both together, after the manner of setters or pointers, and soon I had reason to regret what I had done, for the brother and sister, who never seemed to have aught but the deepest love for each other, commenced such a desperate battle that it required all our combined efforts to get them separated. I was truly grieved for this misadventure, for many days elapsed before they mutually appeared restored to their former affection.

The female, I noted, harboured vindictive

feelings the longest, and, strange as it may appear, I have often noted this peculiarity to be not alone confined to the weaker sex of inferior animals.

It was some time before the baboon would make friends with the new additions to the camp, but in a happy moment he discovered that their thick soft coat harboured fleas; and so, to secure the privilege of sporting in such a happy hunting-ground, for the time being assumed his best behaviour. I was present when he made his *début*, and it was comical in the extreme. The day was warm and oppressive, and all the animals, with the exception of the ape, were reclining wherever they could obtain the greatest amount of shade. The sail of the waggon was fastened from one of its sides to uprights stuck in the ground, and under it I reclined in my chair, smoking my pipe, the position being most eligible for my observation. I saw Jumbo, for that was the entertaining, mischievous scoundrel's name, descend cautiously from his seat on the *dissel-boom* (pole), and I knew at once that his mind was intent on something, from the extreme caution he exercised in his movements. At last he approached the lions, who were lying on their backs enjoying their ease with the most total disregard to dignity. Neither of them having indicated a knowledge of his proximity, closer and closer approached the baboon, till at length he reached out his hand and touched one. No movement followed

this advance ; so, encouraged, he took up a closer position, and in the gentlest manner, with the tips of his fingers, scratched the male's skin. This sensation must have been pleasant, for Leo stretched himself, and involuntarily—apparently—presented a larger surface of his body to be tickled. Jumbo, thoroughly understanding the adage of taking an ell when an inch was offered him, forthwith commenced a search, still keeping up the scratching process. The young lion now raised his head, took a surprised look at the ape, but either not dreading any danger from him, or appreciating the attention shown him, laid his head down again, and apparently went to sleep. This conduct was sufficient encouragement to Jumbo, for immediately after he took a more comfortable and closer position, and forthwith commenced his hunt. The preserve evidently was well stocked, from the constant manner in which he moved his jaws, and from his unceasingly giving utterance to a low plaintive murmur, which was invariably his custom when luxuriating on delicacies.

The ice was now broken, and scarcely a day passed, circumstances permitting, but that both the lions submitted to the baboon's attentions. That familiarity breeds contempt was well worth noting in this acquaintance, for soon Jumbo learned to pull his friends about in such an audacious and rude manner, that I constantly expected to see a break in the *entente cordiale*.

Poor old Jumbo ! he was a useful beast after his way. He did his best to keep the horses and bullocks free from ticks. However, this *penchant* was not actuated by unselfish motives, for he devoured with great gusto all the repulsive parasites he plucked off them. At night he was far more watchful than the best dog I had, and neither man nor beast could approach the camp without his challenging them with his deep booming bark. His seat on those occasions was the top of the waggon tilt, which he never left from sunset to sunrise, except when on the line of march. William and the others said he slept with one eye open ; if so, that one eye was worth half a dozen of ordinary persons.

It was unnecessary to tie Mr. Baboon up, as far as his security was concerned ; but the difficulty was that during daylight it took half the camp to look after him and keep him out of mischief. During the night, if he heard any of the members of his own race barking, he would answer them in a most emphatic, wild, angry voice ; but if, during the day, he should see any of them, even when far off, it would almost drive him frantic with fear. This I never could account for, unless he knew that if they got hold of him they would treat him as a deserter and sacrifice him for that crime to their wrath ; but how, again, could he know this, as he was captured when quite a baby ? Truly Nature is a wonderful teacher !

About this time affairs went on most harmoniously ; game was plentiful, and, therefore, meat abundant, so that frequently hunting was not undertaken. Excessive and good living, as it invariably does in these parts of the earth, made my followers indolent, careless, and saucy, so I determined to treck nearer to the fly country. I had called up William to discuss the proposed move, and had commenced giving him his instructions, when there took place a fearful row on the off-side of my waggon, dogs barking, one of the lions yelling, and Jumbo chattering as if possessed of a fit of ague ; and no wonder. The baboon had leaned down from the back of the waggon and had Juno's tail in his grasp, holding on like grim death, and adding further to the torture he was inflicting by biting its termination whenever the victim made a fresh struggle. I fully expected to see all the dogs turn on the lady, and doubtless such was their intention, but my voice quelled the prospect of riot. Still, the ape did not release the captive. William flew for the whip, but Jumbo, perceiving what was coming, for he had before become acquainted with its persuasiveness, let go his hold and took shelter in the thick top of an adjoining tree, from which sanctuary he did not venture, and then with very great diffidence, until supper was served. The scoundrel knew he had done wrong as well as any child would ; still, the demon of practical joking was so thoroughly instilled in him

that next moment he would go and repeat it if out of sight or beyond reach of remonstrance.

However, poor fellow, it will not do to be too hard upon him, for many a kick he got from the cows that had calves, and many a knock from the camp followers. The last I strictly forbade, but my order was not always easily enforced, for Jumbo invariably brought the punishment upon himself as retaliation for some liberty he had taken. Thus, if one of my followers—it mattered not whether man or woman (in fact, I think he preferred the latter to practise his jokes upon)—made their appearance in a new *kaross* (skin blanket), he was certain to watch his chance, and when such offered seize it, when he would seldom relinquish his hold upon their late purchase till he had effected a big rent in the valued garment.

Again, none of their ornaments were safe from his all-seeing eyes, for if not closely watched, he would grab them and carry them to some inaccessible place, where, with many a grimace and air of intense satisfaction, they would be pulled to pieces. When it is known by the reader that strings of beads are the most valued of the property these people possess, it can be understood that it would be scarcely gratifying to their feelings to see them unstrung and scattered to the winds. But here I must leave the young lions for a time.

CHAPTER XIV.

BAKALIHARI HUNTERS—A GRATEFUL NATIVE.

IF I had been aware of the heavy extent of sand that was before us, and the little water to be found in it, I doubt much that I should have given orders for renewing our trek before a heavy fall of rain had occurred. The consequence was that we got into difficulties before sundown, from many of the oxen refusing to draw. However, by coaxing, accompanied by a due amount of threats, at length we reached firmer ground. But here, through losing the path, we became puzzled, if not lost, in a large extent of thick brush, which in many places exceeded in height the tilts of our waggons. Again a halt was called, to endeavour to ascertain where we had left the trail; but the undergrowth being dense, this was not discovered until too late, for the cattle, now having become cold and stiffened from their prolonged inaction, refused to proceed. Thus we were forced to make a night of it in as objectionable an

outspanning locality as it has ever been my misfortune to be forced to remain in. Jackals and hyænas were numerous in the vicinity, and frequently gave evidence by their various calls that they were not far distant from us. As none of our bullocks had been previously in the lion veldt, or even in a district where these pests of the stock-farmer exist, it made them all excessively uneasy, prevented them lying down, and on two occasions induced an attempt at a stampede, which was only frustrated by all hands turning out, reassuring them by our voices, and at the same time keeping large fires burning on both sides of the restless beasts.

My servants thought, and so did I, that water was not very far distant, but the mischief was, none knew where to go and seek it. Several attempts were made, but all proved futile, thus the morning star was welcomed with almost inexpressible pleasure.

When the grey dawn had succeeded in establishing itself, we found that we were not so badly off as had formerly been conceived, so half an hour at most saw us leaving the bush and ascending the side of a magnificent extent of rolling veldt. After a short search in daylight, I found the lost trail, which, after seeing my belongings regain, I started on horseback with the hope of coming across some natives. In every direction evidences that cultivation had once existed here were apparent; but I traversed several miles before finding anything to

denote that tillers of the soil now resided in the locality.

At length I found some human footprints. They were quite fresh, and unquestionably those of hunters, for the reason that I found several bowers, which had been formed to set guns in, for the purpose of destroying animals that were injurious to their flocks. Turning a corner sharply, however, I rode almost on the top of these people, who seemed uncertain whether to bolt or make a stand of it. If I had been a Boer, they doubtless would have done the former; but, discovering that I was not, they plucked up courage and permitted me to interview them. I found them very fine specimens of their race—Bakalihari—and quite willing to be obliging when the promise of a present was made them for their services, so one took me in charge to show me the nearest water, while the others returned to pilot my people to it. On my route to the promised vley I passed by the side of a native station. It was composed of not more than a dozen huts, and was surrounded by the most formidable thorn fence that I had yet seen. This sight rather pleased me than otherwise, for it told, in very expressive words, that we had entered a country where the large *carnivoræ* were not scarce, and consequently the game they fed on was probably abundant. About this station and within its environs were some of the finest mimosa trees I have noted in this part of Africa, the

summits of which were hung with immense quantities of mealy heads, proof that the harvest had been abundant, and that the residents were not in want of food.

But prosperity did not appear to have had the effect of producing cleanliness, for the whole of the inclosure was such a mass of muck, produced by the constant treading of the cattle that were here sheltered at night, that it looked actually perilous to cross over, for fear of getting stuck in the glutinous mixture. A wild and rough ride through a very rugged kloof, the path of which in many instances was almost as bad as a staircase, from the ridges of rock that traversed it, brought me, with thankfulness, in view of the water. The bush that clothed either side of this kloof was remarkable for its height and the density of its growth, in many parts appeared to be matted together by numerous creepers and different varieties of parasitic plants. My horse being at that time unshod, he made rather a mess over such a roadway, and several times nearly came on his nose, when broken knees would almost inevitably have resulted to him. Such a country as this, with water close by, cannot have failed at one time to have been a special haunt of all the larger beasts of the chase.

I searched the margin of the fountain for spoor, but the surface of it being composed of slaty stone, lying in thin layers in gradually decreasing

elevation till the water was reached gave no signs of visits from any animal. No wonder, for the hardest hoof could not have made impressions upon it. My companion was far from an unpleasant one under ordinary circumstances, but when he had smoked a pipe or two of my tobacco, filled his capacious nostrils with very pungent "Irish blackguard," and imbibed a soupje of brandewein, he became quite a jovial fellow. I regretted much, as I have often done previously, that I did not understand more of the language of these thorough sons of Nimrod, for I am certain I should have been enriched by some extraordinary stories of hunters' successes, or marvellous escapes in *rencontres* with the *carnivoræ*. I do not know that all experience an intuitive knowledge that certain persons are near them before they have been seen. I feel convinced that I often do. Suddenly a thought struck me. What a time the waggons will have coming down the staircase I have so lately descended! When bump, bump, bump, I distinctly heard echoed from the hillsides, quickly followed by many an oath in broken Dutch and Kaffir hurled at the head of the over-abused voer-loper, in the easily recognized voice of my Hottentot driver.

There was work to be done before our heavy loads reached the fountain, and, as natives are never too careful when the eye of the baas is not upon them, I went to take a general supervision of the

transport department's proceedings. I was in the nick of time, for, by all that's precious, the bullocks were already nearly at a trot, and not a soul behind the waggon to put on the break.

With a few polite expressions of disapproval, possibly uttered in excited tones, I soon got the break jammed hard down, and the skid under the wheel. This suddenly caused a halt, but the treck-tow was unequal to the jerk, so parted; and the oxen, delirious with excitement and thirst, possibly tinctured with a feeling of pleasure at playing the driver and voer-loper a trick, did not halt till they were standing belly deep in the fountain, gulping down its refreshing pellucid contents. The gradient was so steep that no oxen were required for the waggon to accomplish its journey. When the breaks were taken off, it made the descent without further assistance than its own gravity. But such a job as this has to be carefully performed, for if duffers, on whom all the duty of guiding depends, are placed at the *dissel-boom* (pole), there is no saying what disaster might happen. I have known, in similar instances, or, perhaps, worse ones than this, for it to become necessary to fasten the treck-tow to the after axle, and thus put a check upon the waggon literally trying to run away from you.

While discussing the propriety of remaining where we were that night, a very old native, who turned out to be chief of the adjoining station, paid

us a visit, his object being to get one of us to go and see his sick wife. Although in dread of the filthy state of the kraal, I consented. (Perhaps I should here say that all these people consider white men are born skilled in medicine.) Well, we trudged up the hill, entered the enclosure, and, through a very diminutive door, glanced into the dark interior of a hut. Scarcely had I done so, when such a storm of flies greeted me, that I was compelled to withdraw. I have seen these plagues numerous in many places, but this occasion beat all past experiences. If the Egyptians had had these loathsome and troublesome insects sent to them in such quantities, I wonder, instead of letting the Israelites go, they did not kick them out incontinently. I am always willing to do an act of kindness—I may say more, I desire it; but enter that hut I could not, unless these filthy insects were entirely removed or much reduced in numbers. Fortunately, my Hottentot was with me to interpret to the old chief my objection to go inside. I feared for a moment that the veteran would be offended; but not he. The old man comprehended the situation in an instant, and gravely, but politely, requested me to remain. Then, whistling, in a few seconds a youngster presented himself, who received a message, and departed forthwith, through mud and filth, at a pace worthy of a professional runner. About the time I had finished a pipe, half a dozen

of the stupid, long-legged, and extremely docile Kaffir sheep were driven into the compound. Each of these animals in rotation was caught, and plastered over with the thick soured milk of which all the natives are so fond. Then the animals were driven to the door of the hut, and there retained by a dwarf herd boy, while several others, with the old man at their head, entered the domicile, each armed with a branch of brush, and, from the noise that was heard to proceed from the interior, it was apparent that the flies were getting "fits." The insects came forth from the door like a swarm of bees, not to depart in peace, but to alight in such masses upon the unfortunate quadrupeds outside as to make each of them, if not absolutely black, quite a pepper and salt colour. I will not say that the sheep liked being treated in this way, but they submitted to the inevitable. Thus, being utilized, they were slowly driven off, bearing upon their bodies their living freight. Soon after, I entered; and although I cannot say that no flies remained, they were sufficiently reduced to permit me to inspect the old lady without inconvenience. Poor old woman! the most skilful medical man could have done nothing for her. She was literally worn out with age, and but a few days remained before she would join the great majority. Yet the first thing she demanded was tobacco and snuff, both of which I was able to supply her with, when her

eyes brightened up most marvellously. I had thought her incapable of moving. In this I was mistaken, for when I tendered her a very mild soupje of brandy, she turned round towards me and jabbered a few words expressive of her thanks and delight. Her aged husband quite won my respect, from the gratitude he evinced towards me for my good offices ; and, as proof that more than mere gratitude of words is known amongst these people, later on he brought a kid to the waggon, not, as he expressed it, to sell, but as a present for my attention. I further gladdened his heart with some more tobacco and snuff, with an addition of coffee and sugar—luxuries these people have learned to know and appreciate from occasional contact with the Boers.

This vley has quite a history attached to it ; it was long the most favoured of Gordon Cumming's hunting grounds, and in its vicinity every description of large game was killed by him. The old chief remembered him well ; and when I informed him that I had seen the big Highlander many times in London and elsewhere, his wrinkled visage became suffused with pleasure. But when I finally told him that the great hunter was dead, sadness seemed to overcome him, and he scarcely spoke another word, but soon after departed to his kraal, looking—possibly in my imagination—far less youthful and elastic in his gait.

CHAPTER XV.

A PICTURESQUE CAMP—A GALLANT HOUND.

THE new camp was reached after two days' most tedious travelling, for the sand was heavy and water scarce. But when it was gained, for picturesqueness of situation it was all that the most fastidious could desire. In fact, there are few fairer lands to look upon than that to the north and west of Pitsani. But there was one drawback. Far too much bush surrounded the outspan to make it a residence that would be safe from the visits of wild animals.

In making our kraal, for I insisted that it should be a most substantial one, the bush in the immediate vicinity got considerably lessened, and keeping up a large supply of firewood for the camp's use also further cleared the surrounding land ; so, little doubting but that game was plentiful in the vicinity—in fact, the abundance of spoor we could see told us so—I resolved to make this a resting-place for a time.

An event occurred here which I think worthy of mention ; but, before going further, I would say

that there are two distinct species of hyænas common to this part of the country. First, the ordinary striped one, which is by far the most numerous, and seldom exceeds twenty-four inches in height at the shoulder; the other is spotted, and is not unfrequently a foot higher than the first mentioned, but, fortunately, these formidable big brutes are comparatively scarce. The former confine their attentions to dead or severely wounded animals, while the latter not seldom will attack women, and often carry children away from the kraal of their parents; they have even been known, where they have discovered hunters or travellers lying asleep at night, to tear off the cheek of the unsuspecting victim, and this is done so rapidly that the disfigurement takes place before the sleeper has time to prevent it. The enormously powerful jaws of these animals enable them to break with ease the largest bones of the *quadrumana*.

Having said so much of them, I will mention the incident that occurred which will give some idea of the ferocity and strength of my gallant hound, Arack. Towards sunset, I severely wounded a gemsbok, or oryx. Being some distance from my camp, I resolved to delay its pursuit until the following morning. Accompanied by Arack, I started at sunrise, but, as luck would have it, a steinbok sprang from a bush almost at my feet, and the brave but disobedient hound went in pursuit. To have shouted



GEMSBOK (*Oryx Capensis*).

myself hoarse or black in the face would not have recalled him; so I pushed on to where I knew I should pick up the spoor of the wounded game. On discovering it, I found the trail so saturated with blood that I knew well the quarry could not be far distant. The brush here had given place almost to a barren flat, over which I cast my eyes, hoping to see the carcass of this beautiful representative of the South African antelopes. About a hundred yards distant, there it lay, but beside it was a large spotted hyæna, enjoying the meal that my rifle had provided. It is bad enough to have your provender wrested from you by a respectable kind of creature, but when such is being done by one of these foul *carnivoræ*, it is unbearable.

I was about to give the marauder the contents of one of my Express barrels, when Arack, with a rush, passed me, going towards the buck as straight as an arrow. The dog did not appear to see the hyæna till he was within a few paces of it, when, moderating his gait to a slow trot, not unlike a setter drawing after running game, with his lips curled, and showing his fangs, he made direct for the thief. But the night prowler was not thus to be intimidated, so turned and faced the enemy, exhibiting his ivories, and assuming a cast of countenance which indicated plainly enough that he considered possession nine points of the law, and was determined to fight to maintain this dictum. I did not

wish my dog mauled, and much I doubted his power to conquer such a formidable antagonist; but so directly was he in my line of fire that I was compelled to hold my hand. On Arack's part there was no hesitation evinced in engaging in the combat; he had thrown down the gauntlet, and the other had taken it up, and, to the honour of the dog species may it be said, he was determined to win or die to support the reputation of his race.

The hound obtained at the first effort a splendid grip; it was just above the shoulder, close to the root of the neck, and, from his performances on former occasions, I was aware it would take almost superhuman efforts to force him to relax it. The hyæna was the heavier of the two, and this gave him a temporary advantage, but agility was on the side of the hound, thus they rolled over and over, each alternately being uppermost. What I dreaded most was that the dog's opponent would secure a hold of one of his legs, and evidently Arack thought the same, for he studiously kept them out of reach. Although I hurried up to rescue my companion, when I arrived on the scene his antagonist was all but done for and quite powerless for mischief. So, to put an end to the contest, I gave the hyæna a barrel at the butt of the ear. After receiving the shot, the blood flowed copiously, and, strange to say, the moment the gallant hound smelt it, he released his hold, and nothing would induce him to approach

his fallen foe. Dogs will eat putrid carrion when nothing better is to be obtained, but this wretched beast had lived upon it from choice for the natural period of its existence, and its ancestors, doubtless, had done the same before, thus its system was so impregnated with the noxious exhalations resulting therefrom as to be too much even for a dog to stand.

CHAPTER XVI.

A QUIET STALK—SUCCESSFUL SHOTS.

IN many parts of this remote portion of Africa I have come across natives who knew well the mighty Nimrod, some even that have hunted with him, and one and all agreed that he was the bravest and most daring white man they ever knew. To them I have recounted the principal episodes which he narrates in his work, and which have been condemned as utterly improbable, nay impossible, by many of his countrymen; but one and all, without a single dissenting voice, attested to their truth. Sicomey, the father of Khama, now king of Bamangwato, when a fugitive at Matchaping's, told me of deeds performed by Gordon Cumming which, if possible, outrivalled those he has recounted in his work; and I have often thought that these were withheld from the British public for the reason that he had not authentic witnesses to produce who could endorse his statements.

A quiet night, early in the yoke, and I soon got clear of the rough country. The veldt before

me was so attractive, that I had the mare saddled up and started for a "still hunt." Although very few waggons pass this way, game, somehow or other, has become so suspicious of them, that it is ever well to get a few miles between your transport and yourself. I chose the westward, for it is there less known, and on this occasion the wind suited better. On passing over a ridge, a piece of open grass land, about an acre in extent, lay beneath me. On it were half a dozen scattered bushes, none of them of a size greater than would reach to a man's waist, so that nothing occurred to prevent my taking a thorough survey of this oasis.

Noting a sudden and impressive pointedness in my pony's ears, and that her eyes gazed in one direction, I followed the hint thus imparted to me, and, to my surprise, saw no less than twenty of those elegant and most beautiful antelopes—steinboks—playing together like so many rabbits in a warren. I jumped off to shoot at the nearest; but the mare, jerking back, disarranged my aim, and my rifle exploded in the air. I mention this incident from the circumstance that I never previously met more than two or three of these gems of the animal creation together.

Crossing over the grass, and ascending the opposite side, I dismounted, and carefully approaching the crest, gazed over the champaign. My prudence had its reward, for not over two hundred

yards distant grazed in a scattered formation a dozen or more of that handsome species, the sassaybe, or bastard hartebeest. The wind suited, as did the ground for a stalk, so I retired from my place of observation, led the mare back to the meadow I have previously mentioned, and, making a *détour* to the left, found that I had good cover to within a short distance of the game. I never remember to have had an opportunity for such an easy stalk, and may say that I considered my eggs hatched before they were laid, when, unaccountable as it may appear, the bucks suddenly threw their heads in the air; one gave a shrill whistle—a call which was accepted by all as a note of assembly—and off they went, bunched so close together, that I firmly believe, if I had followed the poachers' plan of firing into the brown of them, I must have secured a trophy. Something had alarmed them, there was no doubt; yet it was impossible that they could have winded or seen me. At the time, I supposed that it was a leopard that had crossed between the wind and their nobility, on his return home from his nocturnal wanderings. However my disappointment did not last long. I thought I heard the clattering of many hoofs, and looking through the bush just where it edged upon the open ground, a large drove of the same animals going at their best pace, were about to break cover. The distance they were from me could not exceed

fifty yards. I was neither distressed in wind nor uncomfortably warm; so I felt an inward monitor whisper to me: "If you don't shoot straight this time, you are a duffer."

The game broke into the open exactly at the place I anticipated. They were so numerous, so grand, so reckless, and so brilliant in colour, that the sight would have warmed the heart of any sportsman, even that of the oldest veteran. And shoot straight I did. With the first barrel of my Express I brought the leader, a magnificent doe, to the ground all of a heap; while the second shot, aimed at a young buck, caused him to spring seven or eight feet into the air, fall upon his head, and turn nearly a complete somersault.



BECHUANA KRAAL.

CHAPTER XVII.

A HERD OF GAME—IN A DIFFICULTY.

My task had been done effectually, no second shots were therefore required to complete my work ; but, although I knew that none of the flesh would be lost, I have no hesitation in saying that I was not happy, for I have an unconquerable aversion to being a slayer. Believe me, reader, I would many times rather see another shoot than do it myself. Of course this is mere straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel ; but, call it what you like, the feeling exists.

When I was about to approach my victims, I became aware that more game was coming from the windward direction ; and, judging from the dust they made, I concluded that they must be, numerically, a most formidable body. So, with bent back, but rapid strides, I cut across an intervening space of open country, rapidly entered some brush, through which I advanced nearly a hundred yards, and so gained a screen that, unless something unusual occurred, must be in immediate proximity of their future passage.

At first, for the dust was dense, I could only distinguish the leaders of the drove, which were vildebeeste and ostriches ; but soon after I recognized not only sassaybe, but also other game, in the herd. I could not have been more fortunate in the selection of my place of observation, for when the cavalcade swept by I should not be over sixty paces from them ; and, if I might judge from appearances, there were over a hundred rampant, excited creatures composing it.

The vildebeeste, as they generally are on such occasions, were the leaders—fierce-looking, heavy-browed, and formidable-horned creatures, bounding and prancing, with their horse-like tails streaming in the air, while ever and anon their inherent curiosity would cause them to turn to the right or left, to enable them to learn what caused their alarm. These antelopes are fleet, enduring, and possess a tremendous lot of vitality, so require a good horse to overtake them and hard hitting in a vital part to bring them down. At a distance they look like small buffaloes ; close at hand their bodies and limbs are so horselike that their bovine appearance is forgotten, and the uninitiated would almost of a certainty decide they belonged to the equine race. Further, the stranger would conclude that they were mad—stark, staring mad—for, of all unaccountable antics performed by animals, those of the vildebeeste by many degrees are the strangest and most

ludicrous. At one moment each member of a drove will appear to be seized with an unconquerable desire to kill or maim every individual of his species that he can come in contact with, and so engage in apparently the most bloodthirsty conflicts; but, with equal rapidity, these tactics will be changed, when one and all, in a long, tortuous figure, will follow each other, spinning out the most wondrous labyrinths of intricate manœuvres. The Boers say they are mad, the result of having maggots on their brains. That they have large larvæ contained in a sac in that locality is certain, but I think it more than doubtful that these maggots cause their eccentric gyrations.

However, in shorter time than it has taken me to write of the game's advance, the whole squadron passed at a rattling pace. Not requiring more food, I resisted firing for some time, but ultimately the temptation to shoot was too great even for me, when a splendid cock ostrich, in full plumage, came abreast of my position. As the bird was detached by some distance from the rest of this mixed drove, he was going his very best pace to place himself on closer terms with them; for, let the reader now know, if he did not previously, that ostriches will almost invariably be found in the society of antelopes or quaggas.

It is impossible to calculate the speed that these birds can travel for a burst of half a mile; but one



THE MPALA ANTELOPE (*Epyceros Melampus*).

thing I can affirm, so rapid is the movement of their legs, that you cannot follow them distinctly with the eye. A cock of this family when in full plumage, and of the wild race, is a splendid prize, being worth from £70 to £80 sterling. So I pitched the foresight of my rifle upon the centre of his body, then forged about three feet in front of the quarry before pulling the trigger, when over he went, doing no small amount of injury to his beautiful plumes by the abrupt manner in which he was caused to kiss mother earth.

A .500 Express, with a hollow bullet and 5 drs. of powder, is a wonderful killer of all soft-skinned animals when the range does not exceed two hundred yards. After that distance the flight of the hollow projectile becomes very erratic.

For South African shooting, after you enter the bush veldt, as long as you have not buffalo, elephant, or other thick-skinned beasts to deal with, the Express is the prince of weapons; but on the last-mentioned they are comparatively or nearly useless. However, there is no denying that they destroy the appearance of a quantity of the meat in the vicinity of where the bullet has found its billet. On the grass flats of the Orange Free State and other similar localities, where cover is scarce, and game wild, from being frequently disturbed, thus necessitating long shots, say upwards of four hundred yards, being made, they are naught but a source of disap-

pointment and vexation of spirit, even when the solid bullet is used. Under such circumstances nothing equals the Martini-Henry, when the extractor and action work freely ; but remember, I say, when !

But to return to my subject. The cause that had produced such a panic among the game I now learned was from a large mob of cattle, with a gang of attendants, passing over the veldt, a mile or so to windward.

Being well satisfied with my day's experience, I turned homewards, but what was my disgust to find that the mare had taken herself off, and in no direction could I see her. I discovered her spoor in places among that of the game, which I doubt not but she had joined, and the length of the tire-some creature's stride, as indicated by her tracks, was sufficient evidence to inform me that she had broken or slipped her knee-halter.

Now I was thoroughly between "two stools." If I followed the truant, and she led me "a wild-geese" chase of some hours before she was captured, before I returned the vultures would have destroyed all my game. If, on the other hand, I returned to the game and made it secure from the attacks of these useful but often troublesome birds, I should afterwards have to tramp it to the waggons, when it would probably be too late to send for the meat that day, and on the morrow it would doubtlessly be

unfit for human food, if, perchance, the hyænas and jackals did not devour it all during the night. However, I chose to chance the latter course.

Already the carrion-feeding birds were assembling. Vultures in dozens were sailing around, white-necked corbiveaux, in their sable attire and clerical collars, were cheekily inspecting my food supply, or sitting on the larger bushes, expressing in their harsh voices the pleasure they felt in anticipation of a bountiful repast.

I was fairly beaten; the marauders had discovered what I wished to hide from them, and all the labour I could give till nigh on sundown, with only a hunting-knife to cut cover with, would not prevent the wretches obtaining an inroad through any screen I could erect, the moment my back was turned.

To make the best out of a very disheartening and embarrassing position, I went to the ostrich and denuded its body of all the most valuable plumes. They were easy enough of transportation, and some consolation for my disappointment; but, even after I had secured these treasures, I still lingered, momentarily becoming more and more wroth from the impudence of the increasing crowd of vultures and the shortness of time that now remained for me to dispute possession with them. But the birds had not alone found me out; on a ridge, not a hundred yards away, I could distinctly

see two dog-like heads, with large and very full tulip-shaped ears, taking stock of me. Their physiognomy was not for a moment to be mistaken. Once seen, never forgotten, is the impression formed by them on man's memory, and, of all the quadruped creation, I certainly dislike them the most, viz., hyænas, so I thought I would try my marksmanship upon them before I took my forced departure. My first shot was a clean, fair one; the second sent off the object of my aim, but not before he acknowledged a hit with his voice.

This little episode had a soothing effect upon my irritated feelings, and I was about to start upon my wearisome tramp, for I had, at the smallest estimate, ten miles to go, when a native stepped out of the bush. That man was welcome; black as he was, and odoriferous as he was, I could have hugged him. Never did I previously realize so thoroughly that a black man can be your "friend and brother."

He immediately comprehended my situation, and, without explanation or request on my part, went for aid. In half an hour quite a crowd was around me. They were the people I had seen driving the cattle some hours before, and had doubtlessly been since asleep while their kine rested during the heat of the midday sun, till disturbed by my last shots. They were a party of Hasesheba's people, several of whom recognized me, and were

willing to do my bidding. So the doe and young buck were soon skinned, cut up, and on their way to my waggon, which service I paid for with the body of the ostrich. The price might appear high, but I do not hanker after the flesh of an old bird of this species. The only rival it has in giving jaw exercise is an owl. Between the two it must be a tight race; if there are any odds, I think I should bet upon the owl.

I have said that I anticipated that I had ten miles to go before reaching the waggons. I should have been more correct if I had said fourteen or fifteen, for it was nearly midnight ere I regained their friendly shelter, although my companions and myself had pushed on at our very best pace. The tramp was not by any means a lively one, for the night was dark and the face of the heavens, from the heavy scud that was drifting overhead, indicated a probable near approach of stormy weather. The scent of the meat we carried, moreover, had brought a number of hyænas and jackals on our trail, the former of which, on several occasions, became so bold as to receive a salute from some of the men's assegais. Whether, in the uncertain light, any successful shots with these weapons were made, I cannot say, although one beast sung out most lustily. When only a short distance intervened between ourselves and the camp I thought I heard a distant note familiar to my ears. Stopping to listen, it was

not repeated, thus I did not communicate the circumstance to my attendants; but in ten minutes after, the mysterious sound was renewed, and brought the whole *cortége* to a halt. From a kopje scarce a mile off, and whose outline could be distinctly seen against the sky, again and again was repeated the deep, distinct, and never-to-be-forgotten roar of the monarch of the brute creation. The gentleman from whose throat emanated this *basso profundo* music was evidently travelling, and, from the conduct of my attendants, it was obvious to me that they thought it more than probable that he would direct his steps to our vicinity. I spoke to the headman on the subject, and as I did so the tiresome hyænas and jackals gave additional and more emphatic evidence of their vocal powers. The answer I received was exactly what might have been expected, namely, "If the lion hears these confounded brutes, he is certain to think something is up, some beast to be killed or food already provided, and so direct his course to where we are." The jackal has been called from time immemorial the lion's provider. There is more truth in this statement than many suppose; for, if these handsome animals come across a wounded or dead beast, they fight with each other so persistently around or over it, incessantly barking and yelping, that the king of the forest at once knows that food is to be obtained where this turmoil is

going on, so forthwith makes himself acquainted with the cause of his allies' disagreements.

There was nothing for it, however, but to push forward, which we did with renewed energy, and although our position was not without a certain amount of danger, it occurred very forcibly to me that I might at that time be poorer than I was in the morning by the loss of my sturdy little mare. I had bought her green and quite uneducated; through kindness she had become an apt pupil, and was as near perfection as any horse I ever owned. She had no faults, and but one deficiency, that was, she was scarcely as fast as I should have desired; however, in the country of the very big game, her speed for their pursuit was amply sufficient.



CORBIVEAUX.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A PICTURESQUE CAMP—A TROUBLESOME LION.

THE trail of the waggons, which we had struck about half an hour previously, now trended around the base of a large and well-wooded kopje, two smaller ones being opposed to it. On entering this defile, I distinctly heard two heavy shots, and from the sound rumbling along the ground, and the heavy, dull echoes that followed, they were recognized by all as signals being fired from a large-bore gun, with its barrel depressed towards the ground. These shots were repeated several times, and their increased loudness told that we could not be far distant from those who fired them; but we were scarcely prepared to believe that we were as near camp as we actually were. Suddenly rounding a spur of rocky ground running out into the veldt, we found ourselves within a couple of hundred yards of the bivouac selected by my people. The situation was a most charming one, being upon an indentation

almost as flat as a bowling green, and extending nearly half a mile into the hillside. Around the waggons were numerous mimosa trees, so wood was abundant, and the size of the fires, and the ruddy blazes that leaped aloft from them, showed plainly that fuel was not being spared. Many were the greetings we received, for these Africans, as a rule, are a most friendly people, and possessed of much affection for their employers, when they are kindly treated. Of course the strangers whom I brought with me were at once made honoured guests, and such a chattering of tongues, greetings, recognitions, etc., as took place, told distinctly how delighted my own folk were to receive visitors and dispense hospitality.

The mare, I am happy to say, was all right. She had got home about five o'clock, but her appearance without a rider caused no small amount of anxiety. Darkness, however, was too close at hand to follow up her back spoor and make a search for me, but the first light of the morning was to be devoted to that purpose. Moreover, a further cause of uneasiness had existed; the lion which we had heard had come down within a short distance of the encampment, and had shown such boldness that the Totty had thrown a firebrand at him, and, as he asserted, "burnt his whiskers." This being the case, it was feared that I might possibly try to hunt them up, and in doing so come across this

obtrusive gentleman, when it was just possible he might take a fancy to try what sort of food a white man's carcass made. It is always better, under such circumstances as getting lost, if it is after dark, not to endeavour to reach your camp, but select the most suitable place obtainable for passing the night, there light your fire, and console yourself with the feeling that you might be worse off, and that, in all human probability, the morrow will see you extricated from your difficulties.

Before proceeding further, it might be well to describe the general appearance of the sassaybe (*Acronotus lunata*) more frequently known in the colony as the bastard hartebeest. This species is remarkable for its deep ruddy chestnut brown colour along the back and shoulders, which becomes fulvous and tawny as it approaches the belly, while on the forearm and lower portion of the hind-quarters an obviously blue shade pervades the hide. Its face, which is light chestnut, has a dark, broad line descending from the level of the horns to the muzzle, while the horns themselves, which are deeply annulated, after making a wide sweep outward, have their points turned inwards and backwards.

At the shoulder, the sassaybe stands nearly fourteen hands in height, while the droop towards the rump must make the animal at least six inches less, if taking a perpendicular line from the hind hoof to

about a foot above the tail. The eyes possess a very notable ruby tint, and are placed very high in the head; the nostrils are parted by a half muzzle; the lachrymal perforations are very indistinct. Although at one time found in great numbers in Bechuana-land, in my experience I have not found that the *habitat* of this antelope extends to the eastern sea-board. Like the koodoo, it delights in the vicinity of hills, especially where they border upon veldt land covered with open brush or scattered mimosa trees. In former days they were captured in great numbers in pitfalls by the Bechuanas, but this wholesale mode of slaughtering these noble animals has so lessened their numbers, that this means of taking them is not now resorted to. It is a disputed point among sportsmen which is the fastest of the larger species of African antelopes, and I fear that when I affirm that I consider the sassaybe less swift than the hartebeest, many people will differ from me. While on this point, I would say that I have heard persons assert that the oryx, or gemsbok, could not be ridden down. This is contrary to my experience. However, it should always be remembered—and this is, I think, a point that has escaped the notice of many sportsmen—that two animals are seldom hunted under exactly the same circumstances; thus an eland, if fat, can be brought to a standstill by a fast-trotting horse, while one in low condition will give a well-mounted man

as much as he can do to overtake it. Again, the nature of the ground on which the chase takes place, must ever make a most obvious difference ; thus the koodoo, in its favourite mountain *habitat*, will set at defiance the best mounted hunter, but the same animal, if surprised upon the flat, where the soil is firm and free from boulders, can, under ordinary circumstances, without great difficulty be overtaken. In the northern part of the province of Marico, in the vicinity of a settlement called Brakfontein, accompanied by a son of Mr. Froude, the historian, in anything but a favourable riding country, for the ground was thickly strewn with boulders, and in portions covered with dense thickets of thorns, we each rode down a sassaybe, and the distance traversed by both in this performance did not exceed four miles. If the district had been more suitable, I could have killed my beast in little more than half that distance, for several times, when I attempted to rush up alongside of the quarry, I was prevented doing so from the thickness of the bush. I must add, in explanation of the shortness of the run, that when the game was killed, I scarcely ever saw a fatter carcase.

Any one would suppose, after such a fatiguing and harassing day as just passed, that I would have slept when I got to my waggon like the proverbial top, but no such thing was permitted, for, what with the roaring of the lion (that gentleman

having returned) and the repeated efforts of the oxen and horses to break loose, I was obliged to take my seat by the camp fire, so as to be on hand if accidents occurred. Thus, if the reader be not tired of the subject, I will finish the history of my pet lions.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE YOUNG LIONS AGAIN—THE DRIVER COMES TO
GRIEF.

WELL, let me see, where did I leave off? Ay, ay, where the baboon pulled the lioness's tail.

The night after the ape's performance on Juno I shall ever have cause to remember, for a lion actually came into my camp and carried off a goat from the midst of my kraal, and in performing this feat—inadvertently, I will admit—knocked William head over heels. It was in this way.

The night was dark, gusty, and threatened rain; but, as there was a superabundance of meat, my people seemed determined to make a night of it. When I was about to retire to my waggon, I thought I heard a lion calling in the distance; but, as this was almost a nightly occurrence then, I simply ordered the boys to put plenty of fuel on the fire before they turned in. I had been asleep about a couple of hours, when a tremendous noise among the dogs,

horses, and oxen, capped by the deep voice of Jumbo (the baboon), awoke me.

Springing from my cartell, gun in hand, as rapidly as possible, I gained the front of my wagon, its elevated position affording an excellent place of observation.

I instantly saw William passing from one fire to the other, but in a moment he disappeared as if shut out of sight by the intervention of a dark cloud. This had scarcely happened, when I distinctly viewed a lion jump the fence that surrounded the camp, with a large object in his mouth. Naturally, the first thought that entered my mind was that my man was the victim. To fire I had no time; if I had, should I have been justified, with such uncertain light? I suffered most acute anguish for a few moments, but fortunately no longer, for William joined me, abusing the marauder in the choicest terms he could select from the English, Dutch, and Zulu languages. I congratulated him on his escape, and told him my fears; but even this did not seem to pacify him. However, the *contre-temps* was soon explained: the lion had seized a goat, and in its hurry to escape with its prey had run full tilt against my henchman, and sent him spinning in one direction while his gun took flight in another. He had neither bruises nor broken bones; but his dignity, pride, and self-esteem had been grievously hurt. So wroth was he, in fact,

that it took a considerable amount of persuasion on my part to prevent him entering the bush in search of the object that had caused his indignation.

The death of the lion's victim must have been immediate, for it never uttered a cry. Thus, by a merciful Providence, the demise of the smaller quadrupeds is robbed of half its pains, when it occurs at the hands of the "king of beasts."

The lion did not go far to enjoy his meal, and from the noise that took place at the repast it was evident several companions had dropped in to sup with him. If yelling and roaring denoted hunger, then these midnight despoilers must have been ravenous.

But there were other ears listening to this diabolical disturbance—ears which seemed to fully appreciate a music which, up to the present time, they had been comparatively unfamiliar with. Leo and Juno, as long as I had known them, always slept the peace of the innocent from sunset to dawn. The early part of this night had been similarly spent; but, now that they had been roused by the angry disputings natural to their mature species, the devil himself seemed to have taken possession of them, so that they yelled and snarled and fought against their confinement with a determination worthy of the cause of freedom. Certainly the little beasts were not much larger than Clumber spaniels; but, as an American would express it, they were undeniably

"all there." William vowed that their shrieks would bring the old lions upon us. My followers supported him in his belief, and one cowardly wretch, whose value seemed alone to consist in eating and sleeping more than any two of his comrades, in the most unblushing, cheeky manner, proposed turning the babies loose. This man had his supporters, but I crushed this rebellious symptom at the start, by reminding them, in gentle, persuasive language, that I was "boss" of the camp, adding, by way of parenthesis, that I would *chuck* the first man, bag and baggage, over the fence that attempted to release the captives. This harangue had a gratifying effect. Still the little termagants kept up their disturbance with unabated vigour, and endeavoured to their utmost to make their infantile throats utter sounds as threatening and loud as their elders.

The goat did not afford a lengthened repast, for ten minutes after it had been deported the sound of feeding ceased. Another visit to the camp, to obtain a further addition to the feast, might now have been expected; but the lions, having had time to listen, and possibly to think, recognized the noise of the youngsters, and kept answering them in such impassioned notes that, as far as my ear could understand, indicated rage and surprise. Nor were we long kept in doubt what was their intention, for first one, then another, growled close to the enclosure—in fact, it was

evident that we were surrounded—and if our antagonists only acted in concert our position must have become hazardous in the extreme. But if there was danger from without, there was no small amount of it within the kraal, for the cattle were rushing round it, evidently searching for a weak place to burst through.

It was not without some risk of being run over, and possibly trampled to death, that William and myself patrolled the edges of our fence, but the night was too dark to see any object ten paces from us; for a lion, even at that distance, is not easily recognized on a comparatively clear night, so closely does its colour, after dusk, approximate to the ground and herbage. However, we fired a few shots—random ones they might almost be called. Still, I think my man hit something, judging from the yell of one of the enemy, that followed immediately upon the report of his gun.

All the natives have wonderfully good eyes, but I never met any who had powers of sight equal to William. Frequently he has pointed out to me game which I failed to see with the naked eye, even after I had distinctly marked its position with my field-glass.

Well, what with the young lions squealing, the old ones roaring, and the bullocks, goats, and dogs giving expression to their feelings in their respective ways, we all had a lively time of it till day-

break, when the night prowlers, as usual, beat a retreat, and, with their departure, affairs settled down to their usual quiet.

I am convinced, if it had not been for the quantity of fuel we had by us, and the magnitude of the fires we kept alight, a number of our cattle would have been killed, or, equally possible, some of my party would have lost the number of their mess.

Despite its dangers and hardships, a hunter's life, particularly in the interior of Africa, has a wonderful attraction for some people ; in fact, it asserts such a magnetic influence over many, that, having once enjoyed it, ever after they have an irresistible craving to resume it. The constantly varying scenery, the novel incidents that are continually occurring, and the spice of danger which is always surrounding you, must, I think, be the causes that produce this fascination.

The result of that night had a most marked effect upon the conduct of my favourites ; no longer were they playful, affectionate companions, but in place became morose brutes, ever looking as if they were suffering from a wrong and had made up their minds to avenge it.

To them I appeared the least objectionable ; then, in degrees of comparison, came the attendants ; but Jumbo, the baboon, raised their indignation to such a pitch, that this athletic gentleman,

on the first indication of the new light in which he was regarded, gained the tilt of the waggon at one bound, there to ponder over his surprise and disgust.

Here the ape sat and held a monologue, the purport of which doubtless was the mutability of mundane affairs, more particularly of apes. Mr. Jumbo's character I knew so thoroughly, that I was well aware that it was not the loss of his late companions' friendship he regretted, nor was it fear for his own personal safety he dreaded—no! no such thing! but that he was ever, in the vast future, to be deprived of the best-stocked hunting-field of well-fed edible game that he had possessed. But the breach was made, and this noble African gentleman, "all of the olden time," would not, or could not, see his way to closing it. Bribery might have done it, but this member of a family so aristocratic, that its origin was doubtless coeval with Adam's, would not stoop to so unbecoming a course, although he had daily the example of man before him, using this means to such an end and justifying it by the result.

No. Jumbo was a thorough upholder of the exalted hereditary position his family occupied: to servile manual labour he would never descend, not even when his own personal comfort demanded such a sacrifice. Thus, if he was almost frozen to death, he would not light a fire, or, even when his

teeth chattered with cold, would he soil his hands or demean himself by adding a fresh bough or stick to the smouldering ashes.

When the young lions were now released from the confinement of their box, they had to be chained up, but even this step did not prevent them exhibiting the tendencies of their race; for, if an ox or horse approached them, they would crouch, place their heads between their fore feet, and compress their bodies as if desirous of making themselves unobservable, while their eyes would glare with such intentness of look as to tell but too plainly that the fiendish love of carnage had taken entire possession of them.

No longer now were my captives regarded with favour. The natives detested them, the horses, cattle, and dogs fought shy of them, and I alone appeared to be able to keep them in subjection, and that was only done by an amount of severity and punishment that was quite repulsive to my feelings.

Although apparent to all that Leo and Juno were not now to be trusted, there still was one who refused to take warning or advice. This was "Nannie," their foster-mother. As of old, she lay in the sun beside them, and regarded her wards with a jealous care truly touching, although the cubs had become quite as large as herself. In their horse-play, one day, however, they upset the

old lady's dignity by rolling her over. Such a shock to her *amour propre* and deportment was not to be submitted to for a moment, so, rising hastily, with sharp and adroitly handled horns, she commenced with a will to administer punishment for their misdeeds. This they submitted to for a short time ; but when at length they could not escape the persistent attacks made by the goat, for be it remembered that they were chained, Juno, immediately followed by Leo, turned upon her, and, in less time than it takes to narrate it, Nannie's neck was broken and a large piece torn out of her hind-quarters. To rescue the carcass from the young savages was no easy matter ; but, by the aid of their chains, they were at length dragged away, but still growling and struggling, and ever clutching with expanded and protruding claws the earth in the direction of their victim.

That murderous episode had an effect upon the principals engaged in it that was truly wonderful and startling, for their whole conduct afterwards became fiendish ; their days were turned into night, and, except when they slept, during the heat of the noon-tide sun, they were ever pacing to and fro, as far as their limited expanse of cage would permit them.

Their hunger compelled them to eat an extremely moderate-sized ration of bread and milk ; but the reeking flesh which they had once tasted

had left behind such a craving for a renewal of acquaintance with it, that it was observable in every action of their daily life.

Jumbo, wise beast, was quick to see that his late friends were in disgrace, and therefore lost no chance of venting his dislike upon them, for with a bound he would jump upon the top of their box, and as rapidly spring from it, jabbering the whole time, as if lauding himself for his prowess, or for having performed a most praiseworthy action. "Be down on them; they have got no friends," was evidently a course of conduct this distinguished member of our coterie had adopted. Very human-like? I ask the reader. But, not satisfied with these escapades, he was detected in trying to force a puppy's paw, and soon after the domestic cat's tail, between the bars that covered the cage of the lions. William administered to him on each occasion such a wholesome castigation with the jambock, that for days he sat and pondered over the supposed injustice he smarted under and the unreliable nature of man's friendship.

An opportunity occurring at this time to send the lions to Prætoria, *viâ* Zoutspansberg, by some Boers proceeding there, I made arrangements for my charges to be taken south, the Dutchmen to be paid by my agent on safe delivery. In doing business with these superlative blackguards such precautions are most necessary, as the sequel will

show. Through negligence the two escaped from their box. Leo was killed when being recaptured ; while Juno effected her escape, not to enjoy her freedom long, I fear, for she had a strong collar on that must have strangled her before she reached maturity.

In infancy my lions were delightful pets ; in maturer days they proved a constant source of anxiety to me. Still, I cannot regret the many hours I spent in their society, and the study they afforded me, when time would otherwise have hung heavily on my hands. Then, although my reward was not commensurate with my hopes, I have ever deeply regretted their sad and untimely end, and that the careers of poor Leo and Juno should have ultimately closed so miserably.



SPRING-BOK.

CHAPTER XX.

AN OLD REPROBATE—AN EXCITING ADVENTURE.

ALTHOUGH the night was altogether a most uncomfortable one, I got two or three hours' sound sleep towards morning, in spite of the chattering and lullaluing of my servants and the new arrivals.

Soon after break of day, Chummy and myself met at the camp-fire to enjoy our coffee, when it was determined that we should devote the forenoon to searching for his majesty the king of beasts who had disturbed our quiet the previous evening, both by his powerful voice and his desire to appropriate some of our belongings.

One of the new arrivals, who was listening to our conversation, joined in, and informed us "that if we could rid the neighbourhood of this lion we should be doing good service to their chief, for the marauder was an old villain, too lazy to hunt, therefore had taken to killing cattle, and that as likely as not he would soon commence the slaughter of women and children."

As long as lions are young, active, and in robust health, the inhabitants have really an objection to their being shot, for the reason that they provide many a meal for the starving bushmen and shepherds out of the wild ruminants; but when their prime is over they prefer beef or mutton to game, neither of which requires much exertion to capture. Moreover, when an old mannikin sets this reprehensible example to his wives and descendants, it is wonderful how soon his family become demoralized and follow in the footsteps of the head of the family.

Our informant further told us that there was a kraal of bush people a short distance off, at the back of the hill under which we were outspanned, the inhabitants of which could doubtlessly show us where the old gentleman made his head-quarters. So, taking all the hounds, even to Old Bull and the pointer, and all the available people we could muster, some minutes before the sun was up a start was made for the station alluded to. On arrival at it, the headman was summoned, who turned out to be quite a jovial old savage, with a merry twinkle in his eye, that told plainly that he was fond of a joke and good living.

Yes, he saw the necessity or the benefit of getting rid of the old lion; but he added, *sotto voce*, that it was a pity it had not taken his old wives off first. But the whisper was not suppressed enough for an

old, rather than a middle-aged, woman in the chief's immediate vicinity not to hear the remark, and she opened out such a torrent of abuse upon him that, but for his being a very brazen character indeed, he would have been heartily ashamed of himself.

While the old lady was working herself more and more into a passion, several young females, whom I deemed to be daughters of the old gentleman, jabbered, laughed, and clapped their hands with every indication of enjoying the fun, and, would you believe it, the old reprobate encouraged these unseemly actions with many a sly wink or knowing twist of his mouth. The whole proceeding was scandalous. Such a want of respect in a husband for the mother of his family, and in children for their parent, I never previously witnessed ; so I inquired from Totty, was that the way young folks treated their mothers in Bechuana-land? To this question my man tittered, but when he got his countenance back to its ordinarily ugly semi-serious shape, he vouchsafed me the reply, "Him," pointing to a group of five females, the eldest of whom was under twenty—"not his daughters ; all wives."

There is no doubt that many English women have much to put up with from drunken, thoughtless, or indolent husbands ; but then they have the sinners all to themselves, instead of, as in this case, a "boom" of younger charmers to support the transgressor in his iniquity. Should our matrons

not be thankful for such a blessing? The readers will see, therefore, particularly if there are any ladies among them, that we possess a degree of civilization, as well as other trifling advantages, slightly in excess of the people of the country of which I am writing.

However, to the purpose of our visit to this kraal. The old man mustered his clan, and ordered them to accompany us, while he fell in between Chummy and myself, armed with nothing more than a slim six-foot walking-stick, with the intention, as he expressed it, of "seeing his old acquaintance have his whiskers drawn."

All appeared to have no doubt but that they could show us the lion, his hunting-ground having been around their village for some time; but the first cover, a most likely looking place on a hillside, with a northerly aspect, and so facing the sun, was drawn blank. There could be no doubt but that the brute frequently came there, for several lairs were pointed out where the herbage was crushed down, and tawny hair adhered to the bushes.

At first I believed that the lion had given us the slip, and left the cover as we entered it. But such was not the explanation, or else some of the dogs would have acknowledged the scent. Moreover, this hillside fairly swarmed with little buck, that were almost as tame as hares in a deer-park at home, which would scarcely have been the case if

they had been lately disturbed by the sight or smell of their powerful enemy.

Afterwards we adjourned to a kloof, pretty well covered with bush, and in parts possessed of very rough and precipitous sides. Here there were the same indications of the brute's presence, but nothing more. We had agreed not to fire at anything but the game we sought, the report to be considered a call of assembly to the place from where it sounded ; so, in case of bad shooting or other causes, aid would be available. But, in spite of this, I became a sinner; nor could I help it. It was in this way. All were walking in a lunette-shaped line, I being on a flank, the left. For some minutes the baboons had been exceedingly noisy, and, at intervals, making more than usual hostile demonstrations considerably to our front. As a matter of course, I supposed that our intrusion into their domain was the cause of their fuss; but when I got a momentary glance of a leopard through an opening in the bush, I then knew well what had excited the wrath of the apes.

Although I used every effort to get a second view of Master Spots, I was for some time disappointed. However, just as we were getting to the end of the beat, and by far the most precipitous part of it, I caught sight of the leopard stealing from behind a rock, pass over a few yards of open bare ground, and then enter a kloof. I fired, but did so too hurriedly, for the ball struck the ground at least a couple

of yards short, but whether in the ricochet it touched him or some of the spelters from it did, I cannot say, but he uttered a suppressed growl as he pressed with speed for his den. This was a splendid beast, one of the largest and most beautifully marked that I had ever seen, therefore my desire to obtain the skin (one of the best prizes as a trophy, in my opinion, that the game of South Africa yields) can well be accounted for.

Soon we all assembled at the entrance of a *krantz* (*Anglice*, cave), and various were the propositions made to induce the powerful and crafty beast to bolt. But none of them appeared feasible, for the interior consisted of numerous ramifications that led quite a distance along the hillside. While this council of war was being held, Old Bull, a half-bred mastiff, puffing and blowing like a grampus from the excessive and unusual fatigue he had suffered, came up and all but accomplished an entrance into it. But that I was near, he would have done so, for the natives were afraid to put their hands on him ; but such fears did not actuate me, for I seized him by his marlinspike-shaped tail, and, *sans ceremonie*, dragged him out of the orifice, which, if he had had his way, must ultimately have proved his grave.

I never saw the honest old fellow show his teeth to a friend before, but to me he did on this occasion, and that for saving him from certain

death. However, no one under the circumstances could be angry with him, when they remembered that it was sheer pluck that prompted him to desire to undertake such a hazardous enterprise. Even Donna, our invaluable and lady-like pointer, must look into the cavity the leopard had entered, and but that a rheim was placed through her collar, and by it was forcibly dragged off, she would doubtlessly have attempted further exploration.

The big cat had beaten us. Do what we liked, we could not alter the case; so we gave it up with a very bad grace.

There still remained another cover in which the lion was known to occasionally take his siesta, particularly if he had made a kill in its vicinity. It was a tangled covert of very thick reeds and grass, almost an acre in extent, situated at the end of a small vley. As it was dry, and a sharp breeze was blowing, the most effectual and expeditious course was determined upon, viz. to set it on fire. No sooner said than done. In ten minutes the flames had consumed the whole, even to the last blade. Still, not a sight of the game we sought was obtained.

The old chief assured me that there was now no use in looking further for the lion, for when it did not demand board and lodging from him, it usually did from another kraal a few miles distant. So we called up our horses, and with the kindest

of feelings, parted with our good-tempered and too-much-married acquaintance.

As the day was still young, we determined to separate and hunt till sunset. I chose the westward, and as I was on the big bay horse, and he was fresh, soon had several miles separating myself and my friend.

It was one of those bracing days that at home we often enjoy towards the end of spring, but too seldom have in Africa, and I felt that indescribable longing for some-excitement and exercise that would tax my utmost capacity of endurance.

By this time I had reached the brow of a spur leading from one of the hills, so I dismounted to have a look over its crest, when my caution was rewarded, much to my satisfaction, by a view of two splendid bull gemsbok. These magnificent animals, only inferior in beauty, in my opinion, to the koodoo, were about two hundred and fifty yards off. The wind perfectly suited me to stalk them; but, unfortunately, there was not as much cover between me and them as would have hidden a partridge, and the antelopes kept feeding up wind, thus increasing the distance between us. No time was to be lost if I desired to be successful, so I withdrew the hollow bullets from my Express* and inserted solid ones into its chambers. As the game had

* A .450, made by Tolley, of Conduit Street; a better weapon than which I never owned.

increased its distance from me by some yards, I resolved to put up the three hundred yards' sight and aim low. Both beasts were facing about a three-quarter turn from me, so I selected the nearest, and aimed at the edge of the white and black line that indicates the commencement of the stomach and termination of the ribs. With the report the splendid beast fell, without a moment's pain, for there was not a struggle after it toppled over. Its companion turned round, and for some seconds looked at the victim with surprise, then continued feeding as if nothing had happened. I can hear the feeling and kind-hearted reader ask the question, "You were surely not cruel enough to shoot it too?" Yes, I was. But I had an excuse for so doing, if what I am going to say can be accepted as such, viz. that I wanted both the horns of these fast becoming rare animals, for I had previously never seen finer; and further, not a particle of the meat would be wasted, seeing how many hangers-on were about my camp. Well, I took a careful sight for the top of the black mark on the thigh of the second beast, for the quarry was almost broadside to me, and when I pressed the trigger the beautiful creature sprung into the air, pitched forward on its fore legs, fell, then recovered itself, regained its feet, and took off across the veldt at such a pace as made me feel very far from certain that I should bag my game. Putting in fresh

cartridges as I went, I hurried to my horse. In an instant his knee halter was undone, and I had swung myself into the saddle, when, to my surprise, three of my dogs, that I had left with my people, joined me. They might be of use, thought I, so dismissed the subject and turned my attention to the possibility of whether I could gallop a gemsbok down. True, it was wounded ; but as it " streaked " across the plain, from the pace it was going, no one would have thought so.

My horse and dogs saw the game at one and the same moment, and I almost believe that each tried in rivalry to outdo the other in their endeavours to overtake it. For myself, I took a hold of my horse's head, just sufficient and no more than was requisite to steady him, shoved my feet well home in the stirrup-irons, and watched, with no little curiosity, the result of the trial of speed between horse, dogs, and antelope. One of the pursuers was nearly a pure bred greyhound, the others more than half-bred, and although I believe that I was better mounted than any man who had previously entered this hunting veldt, I could not hold a candle to the hounds, although I gained rapidly on the game. Soon the dogs ran up alongside the gemsbok. The leading one being but a puppy, but very promising on account of its pluck, attempted to take a forward hold, when the game made a sweep with its head, the long straight antlers for a

moment disappeared, from the rapidity of the action with which they were used, and the young hound lay upon the ground, sorely wounded, I knew—even unto death, I feared.

Such an example would have been thought a warning to the others; not so, for Kama, a large yellow dog, committed the same foolhardy act as his comrade, and received the same return. I had no fear for the remaining beast; he had always proved himself a cur of the first water, and as such he turned out to-day. It is always so in field sports of the description I write about, the valuable dogs are invariably those of which you are first deprived.



ROAN ANTELOPE.

CHAPTER XXI.

TWO HOUNDS KILLED—A BOER LADY.

BUT to return to the chase. My horse was still going fresh and free, although he had covered over a couple of miles at racing pace, and as I was only a hundred yards or thereabouts behind the game, I called upon the bay with both voice and hand, and soon decreased the distance three-fourths. I had thought the gemsbok was going its best; but, like Paddy's car-horse, that ever "has a spurt in it" to come up to the hall-door, so had the gemsbok "a spurt in it" saved for such an occasion as the present. Diminish the space between us I could not. I did not use the spur, for I knew my gallant horse was doing his best, and therefore what more could I ask? For a quarter of a mile the terms upon which the game and self stood remained unchanged, when, to my intense satisfaction, I perceived it commence to sway in its gait. A minute after its pace was changed to a trot, then to a walk, which ultimately subsided into a halt. Dismounting

as rapidly as I could, for I was terribly blown, I fired, and, would the reader believe it, although not twenty yards distant from the object of my aim, a beast as big as a well-grown two-year-old heifer, I missed it clean. Not so, however, with the second barrel. After its discharge the antelope trembled, as if suffering from a severe attack of ague, then swayed a couple of times, fell over on its side, gave two or three spasmodic kicks, and all was over.

The first shot I had fired at this beast I discovered hit too low down to be fatal, and was therefore little more than a severe flesh wound, thus scarcely calculated to operate much against its speed, so I am inclined to consider that this was a fair trial of swiftness and endurance between a gemsbok and a horse. It must be remembered that the ground was almost level, and free from obstructions of any description, while the oryx was in far better condition than these animals are usually found.

As I have said before, whether the large antelopes can be ridden down depends entirely upon the condition of your horse, or of the game, and the nature of ground on which it is done.

But, returning to this run, one of the very finest I ever enjoyed, it cost me a heavy price, for on my return journey I found one dog dead, and the other so seriously injured that I had to shoot it.

When wild dogs or hyænas attack any of these large bok, they invariably make for the flank. If my poor hounds had done likewise, they might have been my companions for many a day to come.

While riding home I will attempt to describe the gemsbok (*Oryx capensis*). The greater part of its body is a dirty cream colour, upon which are beautiful black markings; first on the face, from the lower part of the horns to the bottom of the jaw, runs a jet line traversing the eyes, in front of which come a large black blaze up half-way above the nostrils. A mane extends from between the ears to some distance beyond the withers. Again, there is a peculiar and angular-shaped pattern, gradually increasing in width, also black, from the termination of the mane to the setting on of the tail, which latter is very ox-like, but more tufted. Both fore and hind legs have a black blaze down to the knee and hock; while in front, just at the part of the neck that would be most prominent in an ewe-necked horse, is a very prominent black bunch of hair. The horns, which are strongly marked with corrugations over a third of their length from the base, are almost straight, but gently turn outwards from each other towards the points, and are often over three feet long, while the mature bull not unfrequently reaches thirteen hands in height at the shoulder.

The gemsbok is truly a beautiful animal, in many

respects very equine, and assuredly, of a truth, I would any day sooner gaze at it and enjoy the admiration it is sure to invite, than align my rifle-sight upon its comely flanks.

At sundown I got home ; but Chummy did not return for an hour later. He had killed a barren cow hartebeest, which had given him no end of trouble before he secured it, although afterwards it was discovered to have been, at the first fire, hit through the heart. It is perfectly surprising, almost incredible, what wounds these grass-feeding animals may receive before they are brought to bag. It is also the same with elephants and buffaloes—more especially the former ; for I have known them left for dead at night, and nowhere to be found when the sun rose. On the other hand, the carnivora, if seriously wounded, never recover. The difference of diet in this climate is no doubt the cause.

As our camp was well sheltered, very pretty, abundantly supplied with water, and we had plenty of meat, we resolved to remain here for a day or two with the intention of having a general clean up as well as with the hope that our nocturnal visitor, that we had so hopelessly sought, would again put in an appearance. My friend was particularly anxious to kill a lion. So was I ; but luck did not seem to be disposed to favour us, so we were discussing the propriety of making a movement further

to the edge of the Kalihari Desert, for the reader should know that we were now considerably more than one hundred miles to the westward of the trade route, and, consequently, in a country that had not been disturbed by the firearms of the white man, when a deputation of natives arrived to ask us to render them aid under circumstances which were doubtless most trying. These delegates came from a village about a day's trek from our encampment, and had been sent by their chief for the purpose of requesting us to visit him, as an old lion had, on two successive evenings, broken into his kraal, and on each occasion killed and carried off a calf. This beast was an old offender, for, not more than a month ago, he had perpetrated the same offences, and had become so bold that he totally disregarded the presence of the residents of the station. This was, doubtless, the brute we sought for, and, as time was no object, it was resolved to comply with our visitors' desire; so they were amply supplied with meat, and the morrow fixed for our departure. Scarcely had we got under way, when a good-looking young Boer rode up to me, and, after expressing himself in unimpeachable English, and with much greater courtesy than is generally expected from his nationality, he informed me that he was only outspanned a few miles off, and that his frow, the previous evening, when getting into their waggon, had got kicked by one of the after

bullocks, and he thought her leg was broken ; anyhow, his wife was suffering intense pain. I do not like this bastard Dutch breed much—better, and more truthfully, I may say, not at all ; still, it was impossible to refuse to give what aid was in my power to the sufferer. So, as the waggons started, I mounted my roan mare, with splints, bandages, and a bottle of chlorodyne in my pocket. The distance was not far, and I noticed particularly that the unfortunate uttered no complaint until she heard her husband and myself outside her waggon ; then her lamentations became heartrending. I have known similar eccentricities occur not so very far from home. However, I was duly introduced to the sufferer by her husband, who also acted as interpreter.

This ceremony, trifling as it may appear, brought on additional and more severe paroxysms of pain ; in fact, so loud were her groanings that the native boys (all servants are called boys here, however old they may be) stood still, as if awe-stricken. The patient was a good-looking young woman, about five and twenty, but inordinately stout. In her belief, her leg was broken at the knee, and its utility was gone for ever and ever. I requested to see the injured member. Show it ! no, that she would not. Did ever mortal hear of such an immodest request ? Did I think she, a Boer, was a Hottentot, a Kaffir, or a

Bushman, in making such a proposal to her? I exhausted my stock of arguments in explaining that it was impossible for me to advise treatment unless I thoroughly comprehended the nature of the injury. All was of no avail, persuasion and threats were alike thrown away, so I ordered my horse to be brought up. The husband, poor fellow, seemed much annoyed, and begged me not to depart, so I delayed mounting. I was willing to be of service if I could, but how could I be so unless I understood exactly the nature of the injury? I explained this to him; of course he saw my position, and understood it at once. After he had gone back and forth several times between his wife and myself, he brought intelligence that she would consent, provided I never told any one in the Transvaal; so, with this understanding, I re-entered the waggon. I have seen bashful maidens of fifteen, and bashful old maids of fifty, but never such a superlative degree of squeamishness exhibited as here. Inch by inch her skirt was raised; in half an hour its selvage reached the knee, and then at a glance I saw what was the matter. The knee-cap had been kicked on one side. But what else did I see? the dirtiest leg I supposed possible to exist; it was literally encrusted with filth, the accumulation of ages. When I rejoined Chummy, he asked me regarding my patient; without an effort there came to my lips

the following couplet. Both laughed much over it at the time, so I committed it to paper. So here it is—

To tell the truth, without any gammon,
The grime on her knees was like scales on a salmon.

Without exception the Boers are the filthiest people in the world; the heathen are nothing to them in this respect. I have often heard one of the *he* creatures boast that he had not had his trousers off for six months.

But let us hurry on, for the knee is bandaged, and a bottle of arnica has been promised to use as a dressing.

So much time had been lost, that it was nearly nightfall before the *cortége* was overtaken, and then it was about entering the kraal that formed its destination. There was a crowd assembled to bid us welcome; out of its ranks rushed a coloured man; in a moment he seized me by the hand, and kissed it a dozen times. Who was it? Who could it be? Who tendered me so warm and genuine a welcome? Who do you think, patient reader, it was? My well-trying, faithful, and much-loved Cigar, the Hottentot!

Poor fellow! He had been all over the country in search for me, misled at one place, misdirected at another, so had been more than a month in accomplishing what should have taken him less than a week. However, all's well that ends well;

but Chummy did not evidently think the same. For why? Cigar, who only arrived at the kraal this morning, having heard of the depredations of the veteran lion, to while away time at once went in pursuit of him, and succeeded in giving the beast a wound, the severity of which we hope to learn in the morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN OLD FAVOURITE BLOWN UP—DEATH OF A LION.

As may be supposed, Cigar and myself spent a most enjoyable evening, discussing former adventures and inquiring after mutual friends. At length, after a pause in the conversation, I asked him where Jansey, an old driver, was, and whether he could not be induced again to take service with me? To my surprise and sorrow, I was informed that he was dead.

“How was he killed? How did it happen?” I asked.

“Blowed himself up,” was the answer.

“But how? Tell me.”

“Easy enough; he went to set a bottle for a hyæna, and it went off. No one knew anything about it till next day, when he was missed; then they had a search for him, and he was found scattered all over the veldt, bits of him hanging on the bushes, just like so much biltong left out to dry.”

In a moment I comprehended how the accident had taken place, for Jansey often, on my last trip, accompanied me when I set a bottle to kill the "hyæna vermins;" but I had warned him, not once, but a dozen times, never to attempt this mode of destruction himself, or an accident was certain to happen. But my caution had evidently been disregarded, and, as a result, a good servant and capital hunter had been added to the vast majority. As my readers may not understand what is meant by setting a bottle, I will explain.

Take an ordinary bottle and fill it with powder, then bury it underneath where the bait is to be suspended. The cork is now placed in it, which has been bored lengthways and sheeted with sandpaper in such a way that a lucifer match can be drawn up through it. While the further arrangements are being made, the string which passes through the cork to the match should be wound round the neck of the bottle. The bait, a piece of raw meat, having been attached to the string by the aid of another line, is gently lowered from a distance till it remains suspended a few feet over the bottle, the string round the bottle's neck disengaging itself to permit the bait to descend very gradually. Thus it will be understood that if the bait is dragged at, the match passes up between the sandpaper, and an explosion immediately ensues. It is a dangerous device, almost as much so to the

setter as to the vermin to be destroyed ; at least, poor old Jansey had found it so. I say I would not advise people trying this experiment.

At an early hour next morning the whole party were astir. We had our work cut out for us. An unwounded lion can at times give trouble ; a wounded one is certain to do so.

In spite of danger, we mustered a goodly number of volunteers, but only two of these were armed with guns, the most miserable, antiquated muskets that ever the sun shone on. However, it spoke well for the pluck of these people, that they were willing to risk such an encounter when so inadequately armed.

As anticipated, on inspecting the muddy margin of a vley of water, fresh spoor was found ; for a wounded lion, like a wounded man, must, if possible, obtain water, but after this discovery we were all thrown at fault, for the ground was baked so hard that no evidence of a track could be found upon it.

Not expecting thus to be defeated, the dogs had all been left at the waggon, for the reason that they were too valuable to risk their death or injury, but no course remained now but to send for them. The chief of the station stated that his people possessed several good dogs, which we might willingly have, so they were also ordered up. In due time the pack was mustered. The reader

is already conversant with my kennel's appearance, not so with the brutes that composed the Kaffirs.

As a native never feeds a dog, it can well be imagined that these were thin; more, they looked like moving skeletons, and in form much more resembled wild animals of the jackal type than anything else.

Cover was very sparse—it may almost be said that there was none; so we stretched out into an extended line, and in this formation advanced for nearly a mile.

Every few hundred yards that we advanced a steinbok or duikerbok jumped up within a few paces of the beaters, and went off, with the whole pack of curs in close attendance. Knobkerries were hurled *ad libitum* by my associates, and several of these interesting animals were placed to our credit. As these animals stand as high as a goat, it is perfectly surprising how they can secrete themselves upon such bare ground. The only explanation I can offer is that the colour of their coats approximates closely with that of the soil. After more than a mile and a half of tramp we reached a dip in the veldt, which was, if possible, more sterile than the ground we had lately passed over; so, with one accord, all agreed that the object of our search had not sought it for a sanctuary. The question now arose, where can the brute have gone? One of the Bushmen surmised to an adjoining hill;

another to some kopjes a couple of miles distant. But the old chief explained that a second vley of water existed two miles off, and that he thought the old thief most probably had gone there, as it was long known as one of his favourite drinking-places.



VILDEBEESTE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SPLENDID TROPHY—THE GIANT KINGFISHER.

CIGAR, like many great men with vast experience, hesitated to offer an opinion until appealed to. With such an authority as I knew he was, I doubted the propriety of expressing my ideas, so asked him his suspicions upon the matter. His answer was, "I don't know this country, but, from my knowledge of lions gained elsewhere, I should say the old chief was right." This response decided the question in dispute, so off we went *en masse* to the pond indicated. The banks of the vley were muddy, and the water, from evaporation, was sunk considerably below the level of the adjoining country. The goats and sheep of the neighbouring village had trampled its edges most thoroughly the previous evening, but over their track, in the sticky and adhesive soil, was easily distinguished the broad footprints of the animal we sought. More than that, to confirm our belief that we were on the spoor of the right beast, a few splashes of blood were found adhering to the scanty herbage that

grew at intervals between the veldt and the water. As all wild animals go up wind before lying down, although occasionally some turn a short distance back upon their course, we resolved in a protracted line to beat up against the breeze. Again there was the same chevying of steinbok and duikerbok, and again the knobkerries were hurled with equal effect, till at length we reached an indentation in the ground, where the bush was much more abundant than previously. Some of the curs made a dash for it; but all, with the exception of three, immediately afterwards turned tail and found refuge behind their respective owners. Those that still kept in advance exhibited by their manner that something unusual was before them, for, in place of their previous happy-go-lucky, reckless conduct, they now advanced at a most measured gait, while the ridge of hair upon their backs stood almost erect.

Cigar, who was close to me, whispered, "The old scoundrel is in front of us. Keep a sharp look-out, and, if I'm not wrong, you'll see him stealing through the bushes." Scarcely had he expressed himself thus, when he pitched his snider to his shoulder, took a lengthened look along the barrel, and again brought his rifle to the carry. "I thought I saw him," said he, and scarcely had he finished the sentence when again he apparently took aim and fired, the report being greeted with a protracted and angry howl.

This was the signal for a tremendous stampede ; but, instead of it being directed from the point of danger, it was concentrated around the chief, Cigar, and myself, who were close together. That the bullet had hit the object it was aimed at I had no doubt, for I heard the ominous thud that ever truly tells that the bullet has hit the target it was intended for. However, we soon knew that it was not fatal, for the curs that led the advance immediately dashed into the cover and disappeared, soon after to give us warning where they were by their vociferous yelping at some description of prey two hundred yards to our front, where a jumble of rocks and masses of upturned clay, covered with parasitic creepers, formed just such a sanctuary as a wounded enemy of this description would choose to seek cover in. The pluck of these dogs gave the others courage, and they now rushed forward, the whole pack making a row that would have been sufficient to waken the dead, if there had been any secreted in that locality. Cigar said it was the lion he fired at. One of the chief's head men asserted he had seen the brute, and he was supported in his statement by a Bushman who was in the immediate vicinity. A second advance was now made, but when we reached where the dogs were baying, a certain amount of irresolution was characteristic of the whole party. I confess I did not care about entering this labyrinth, with rocks, briars,

and bushes, entangled in such a manner as to almost shut out the light of day, and therefore preventing your seeing the foe you were opposed to, until it was within springing distance of you. However, a young Kaffir, a well-made, handsome fellow, of about eighteen years of age, doubtless wishing to show himself off before his chief, went to the front, and, after exhorting his countrymen to follow him, which they did not seem at all inclined to do, made a further advance. Previously all had been still, if we except the clamour made by the dogs ; but now a roar, if not rivalling thunder, at all events a very near approach to it, was heard, and with the sound out bounded the lion, intent on striking down the adventurous youth. I had looked at this lad's exploit as a piece of bravado, and was thus scarcely prepared for what took place ; but Chummy, ever cautious and careful, had his reward for being so, for he got a snap shot, which turned the foe and caused him to again retreat into the security of his sanctuary. Nothing afterwards would induce the brute to come out, the result of which was that recklessness and foolhardiness became the order of the hour, which, if it had been persevered in, must have resulted in some person being killed or severely mauled. Former experience told me that such a result could be anticipated, and all I said availed nothing to prevent it. At length the chief and Cigar backed me up, and those youngsters who

were anxious to extinguish or distinguish themselves were compelled to listen to reason.

A ring was now formed round the shelter that the lion had selected, but all our efforts to induce him again to show himself were thrown away. Several of the dogs stood in front of a dense clump of brush under the shadow of a giant boulder, and, I might almost say, pointed the game. A quarter of an hour was consumed in hurling stones into this tangle of scrub, but our enemy evidently had had enough of shooting to prevent himself being again made a target, and things began to hang heavily on our hands. In my old Indian days there were many youngsters I can remember who would have literally bearded the lion in his den, but I confess the result of years and experience causes me to look at such escapades as inexcusable acts of foolhardiness. However, Cigar did not see it in this light. He was old, a good many years older than I am, but then he was crafty as a fox, and knew the ways of wild beasts as if he had been a wild beast himself; so, when he proposed climbing up the boulder on the reverse side, so as to obtain a position overlooking the foe's hiding-place, I consented. While he was accomplishing this feat we kept up more than the former amount of clamour, so as, if possible, to draw off the wounded animal's attention from the adventurous exploit of my henchman.

At length I observed his woolly head protrude

over the top of the rock. Every eye as well as mine noted it, and the row was renewed with additional vigour. Soon after we saw him approach the edge of the giant stone, and peer into the abyss beneath ; for a few minutes he paused, then drew his rifle, which had been by his side, forward, and gradually putting it over the edge of the declivity, took a long steady aim and fired. The response was a roar, followed by several choking, guttural sobs ; and all was silent. Any attempt to preserve order was useless ; every native rushed in, assegai in hand. But weapons were now uncalled for, as the aged hero, who had so long despoiled their village of its calves and goats, lay upon his back with his feet in the air—dead.

Although old and showing the signs of age perceptibly in his teeth, this lion was a splendid specimen. When pegged out, without undue stretching, the hide, from muzzle to tip of tail, measured 10 ft. 11 in. This animal was stated by the natives to be over twenty years of age ; further, that he had been only lately driven out from the coterie of his family associates, and that it was since then he had taken to killing their flocks and similar evil courses.

On returning to the station, I found the Dutchman with his waggon there, the man whose wife I had lately been called upon to attend in reference to her wounded knee. The lady was much better,

and, as the skin had not been broken, I recommended a continuation of arnica for the future treatment of the contusion. For the benefit of the traveller, let me remark here that, for similar injuries, I have ever found it invaluable both in the treatment of man and beast.

I neglected to say that, on my way home, I shot a specimen of the black-and-white kingfisher, a very rare bird in this part of South Africa, although it is not uncommon two hundred miles or so to the westward of our present position, viz. in Great Namaqualand; a country, from its barrenness and dearth of water, seemingly entirely unfitted for the requirements of a member of his family.

It was sitting on a low twig watching the surface of a rain vley, which could not, by any amount of human imagination, be supposed to contain fish; but the kingfisher, likely as not, knew better. Its incessant chattering first attracted my attention to it, a peculiarity not possessed by other species of the family, if I except the laughing jackass of Australia; and, when two are found associated, through this peculiarity of character, they keep their vicinity quite lively. Moreover, it is so far from shy that it may be deemed impudent, and has a most comical way of twisting its head to the right or left, at the same time assuming an inquiring expression, which seldom fails to cause the observer to laugh.

It is about the size of our blue jay, builds in



BLACK-AND-WHITE KINGFISHER (*Ceryle bicincta*).

banks, and frequents, indifferently, salt or fresh water.

I have never seen a specimen of this kingfisher in any of our museums; it was for this reason that I took the poor thing's life.



ROAN ANTELOPE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A BREAK DOWN—LOVELY LANDSCAPE.

THE following morning a man arrived at our out-span from Honey Vley. Upon being questioned, when he interviewed us, as to the sport to be obtained in that locality, we learned that vildebeeste, gemsbok, and hartebeeste were plentiful, and that a family of eight lions had established themselves in close proximity to the station, and that less than a month ago one of this interesting family had actually forced an entrance into the village about sundown, put the shepherds to flight, and walked off with a goat.

Since our meeting with Bareekey, at T'sinning, we had resolved to visit Honey Vley, for two reasons—first, that game was supposed to be abundant in its vicinity; secondly, that an immense cave exists within a mile of it, in which uncountable numbers of bees have for years made their home, and consequently collected therein an enormous

quantity of honey. A further reason, I might add, stimulated me to desire to make this interesting locality a halting-place, viz. that it was long the head-quarters of that greatest of all South African Nimrods, Gordon Cumming.

The next morning I devoted to examining the horses as to their condition and fitness for the more trying ordeal of hunting big game, such as elephants, rhinoceros, etc. The inspection was most satisfactory, for all were as hard as nails, although possibly a little low in flesh. However, this last defect could easily be remedied by giving them a week's rest in the first good grass country we reached; but it was more satisfactory than anything else to find that not one of our stud had an abrasion of the skin, let alone a sore back. For this immunity from a misfortune far too common in this part of the world, and most difficult to cure when contracted, I have to thank the saddler who supplied me with all my horse gear. His manufactures have, in consequence, become so popular in the colony that many of the irregular frontier forces use no other. Yoke-keys, strops, yokes, and treck-tows had now to be overhauled; but as Cigar could do this as well as myself, and, further, see the hubs of the wheels well supplied with antifriction grease, I mounted my mare, took my Tolley Express and rode forth, for the double purpose of finding meat and seeking adventure.

To the north, at the comparatively short distance of four or five miles, was situated a lovely ridge of hills, whose greatest elevation did not exceed seven or eight hundred feet. The shadows of the clouds, just as you see them in bonnie Scotland, glided with rapid steps over their surface, which was rendered most attractive by the bright green and golden colour of the brae's surface. Something in their outline or repose reminded me of beautiful Malvern, to my mind the most charming watering-place in all England; so I directed my course towards them. For the first mile I was able to pursue my way at a sharp canter, but afterwards was compelled to pull up, for the surface of the country was completely undermined with meerkat holes. In whatever direction I turned my eyes, there they sat, those "queer wee beasties," looking exactly like charred stumps of trees; for, although their colour is a warm brown, at a short distance—say a hundred yards—they appear to be black. They are very curious and interesting little creatures, and are gifted with the most imperturbable expression of countenance, that cannot fail to make the observer smile. Their position, when sitting up, is stiff as a ramrod, and quite perpendicular. However, the moment they consider an aggressor has approached sufficiently close to imperil their safety, apparently without an effort they take a surprising header into their burrow. For this leap they apparently make no

more preparation than does a loon, cormorant, or shag before going under water.

The meerkat is to South Africa what the prairie dog is to the North American continent. There is also a further curious similarity between them—these animals of the old and new world; their burrows seem to be the favourite haunt or trysting-place of snakes and diminutive owls. Through this specimen of *quadrumana* having been first brought to the attention of European zoologists by the well-known traveller, Le Vaillant, it has received its specific title, *Cynictis Levaillantii*.

But, slow as my pace had been for the last half-hour, I had by that time reached the sky-line of the hills, and before me extended a great stretch of not inviting country, for it was flat almost as a bowling-green, sparsely supplied with bush or grass, and totally destitute of trees, while the surface in many places, was cut up with huge sand-cracks or dongas, some of these rifts being large enough for a small army to find shelter in. But, scant as herbage appeared on this unattractive landscape, numerous springbok found here an abundance of subsistence. Even at the elevation I had gained, so slight was the breeze, that it was only by tossing dry grass into the air that I ascertained in which way the currents of air were moving. As I wanted meat, and a couple of springbok would, exactly fulfil my requirements, I resolved upon a stalk; and, to make success doubly

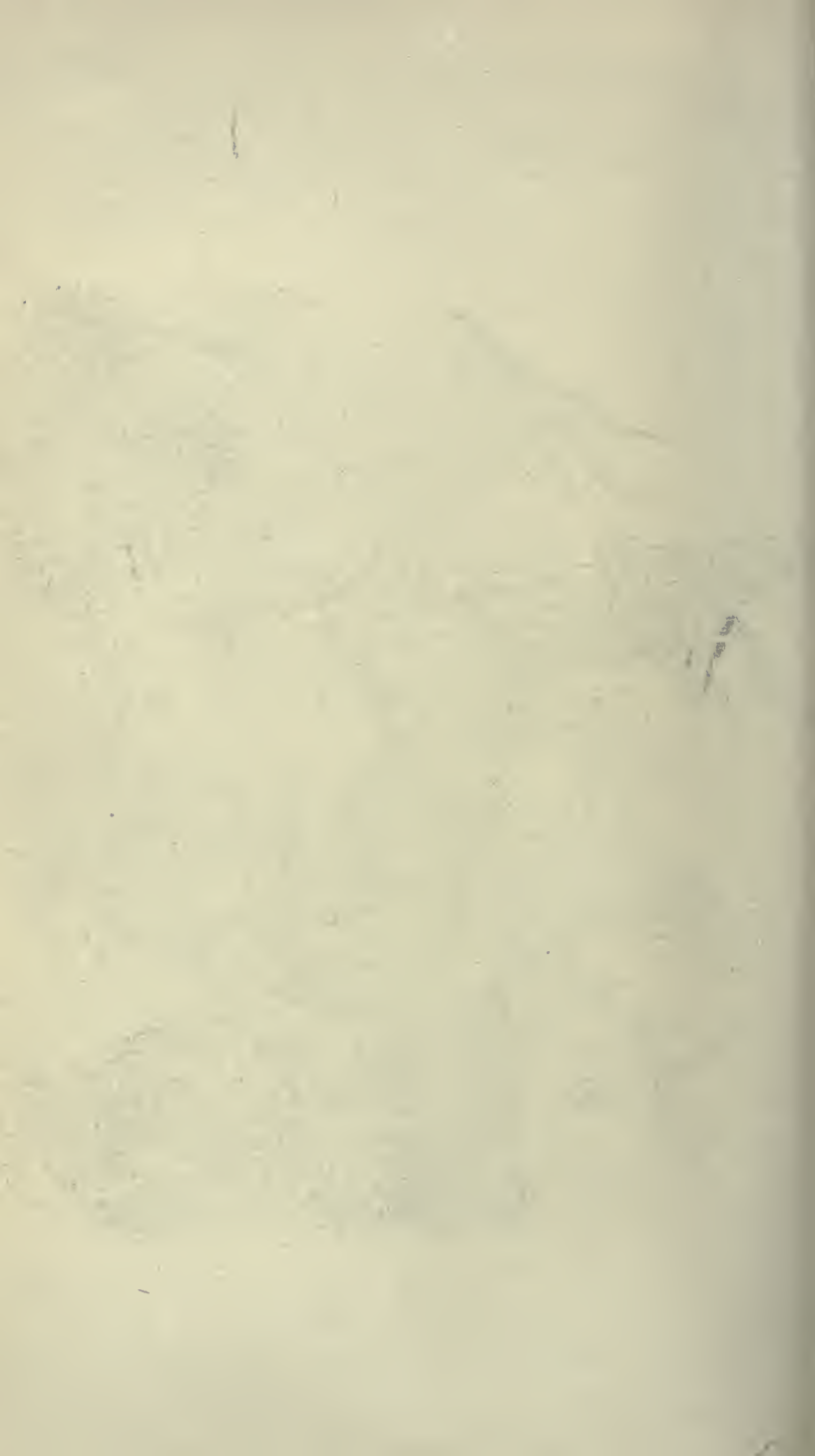
sure, I made a detour to the south-west, rode up a donga for a couple of hundred yards, dismounted, hobbled my mare, and took a view over the edge of the crevice. To my satisfaction, there were the antelopes, but at least two hundred yards further to my left; so, drawing my head down out of sight, with silent footsteps I followed the course of the sun crack, the bottom of which was almost as smooth as a military covered way.

Directly in front of where I a second time raised my head was an ant-hill—in fact, the whole country was covered with these monotonous and uninteresting excrescences—and not a hundred yards off, in all the consciousness of feeling secure from interruption, fed five of these beautiful and graceful representatives of the South-African fauna.

I had loaded with hollow bullets, and both did their duty well, for the victims fell and yielded up their lives at once, without giving the spasmodic struggle that almost invariably accompanies violent death.

The remaining companions of the slain did not appear the least alarmed at the report of my rifle, or conscious of the fate of their comrades, but continued nibbling up portions of the scant herbage in the delicate, fastidious manner peculiar to their species. If I had desired to do so, I might have shot every member of the party, but desisted, and trust that all sportsmen will follow the example I set them,





namely, to cease slaughter when they have obtained enough for their requirements.

When I showed myself over the bank of the donga, there was a scurry among the innocents, all going off, up wind, as fast as their graceful legs would carry them, every third or fourth stride being broken in its monotony by a spring into the air of clear eight or nine feet.

Having pulled the carcasses into my late shelter, I went for my mare, and soon had the spoils over her back, first having knocked off the horns, a performance that never must be forgotten, for, secure your game as you like behind your saddle, the heads will keep dangling about, and, unless great care is taken, inflict serious wounds upon your horse. I would impress this upon novices, for I had one of my most valuable mounts all but ruined by neglecting this precaution. It occurred in this way. I had shot a steinbok, and the animal which I rode, being young and inexperienced, had a great objection to the quarry being placed upon his back. At length, by coaxing, gentleness, and kindness, I succeeded ; but, just as I had done so, a number of quagga and vildebeeste charged past me. My mount broke loose and followed in their wake, kicking and bucking every few strides he took. This conduct struck me as strange at the time ; but the reason for such capers I did not suspect. However, when my horse was secured, all was explained. The buck's horns had

made innumerable punctures on the poor animal's flank, a foot or more behind the girth. Fortunately, the steinbok was a youngster, and its prickers scarcely an inch in length, or doubtless I should have lost what ultimately turned out to be a most valuable hunter.



BUSHMAN MUSICIAN.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHEETAH—ILL-ASSORTED TRAVELLERS.

HAVING loaded up my prizes, I was about to start homewards, when the conduct of some springbok struck me as strange—so strange, in fact, that I resolved to unravel the enigma. In front of me were a dozen or more animals of the same species as those I had just slain, distant about four hundred yards. With inquisitive, and at the same time angry look, closely packed together, they kept advancing, every moment one or other showing his or her disapprobation by an angry stamp of the fore foot.

I took out my glass and watched them for several minutes, but I could observe nothing that incurred their displeasure. Here was a mystery. Naturally, I formed some ideas of the cause of such strange conduct, and those ideas were, that either a large snake or one of the *carnivoræ* were in front of the antelopes; so, putting my glass into its case, I untied the rheims that bound the game to the cantle of my saddle, took an extra pull upon my girths, mounted, and sought a

practicable passage out of the donga. This I found without exposing myself; but there was no necessity for this secrecy, for when I was on the plain not one of the buck appeared to take the slightest notice of my approach. Something had evidently bewitched them, to which they must draw closer, although their manner indicated that the alternative was far from a pleasant one.

Taking the mare well in hand, I made a dash for the fascinated animals, but until I was within thirty or forty yards of them they totally ignored my approach; then, however, they slowly trotted off, again to reassemble within short rifle range, and inquire from me, if their expression could be so construed, "What do you mean by interfering in what does not concern you?" I stood and gazed at the beasts in absolute wonder. Never had I seen springbok so tame; in fact, they were more than that—they looked as if they had the intention of disputing my right to ride over the veldt.

While taking stock of these beauties, my mare had been nibbling at stray blades of grass that were within her reach; suddenly she ceased to feed, and gently raised her head; at the same time keeping her eyes fixed upon some object that had attracted her attention. I was not long kept in doubt what it was. From the back of an ant-hill, at the base of which grew a considerable quantity of rank herbage, glided what I at first supposed to be a leopard, but



CHEETAH (*Gusparda jubata*).

a second glance told me that it was a cheetah (*Gusparda jubata*), so often stupidly called hunting leopard; I say stupidly, for it is in no way related to the spotted beauty that is such a pest to the pastoral farmer and a terror to the ever-watchful baboon. Here, however, was a chance to try the fleetness of this well-known beast, in whose speed I have no faith, if required to be sustained, although I will acknowledge, and in this point I thoroughly agree with my old friend, Mr. Blyth, once curator of the Calcutta Museum, that for three or four bounds its velocity exceeds that of any other quadruped.

When first I saw the cheetah, he was stealing away, as if desirous of escaping observation; but the moment I gave a "view halloa" and dashed towards him, off he went with several bounds, which, if continued, would soon have left me nowhere; but this was not to be. The animal settled into a long lope, not unlike the gait of a wolf or hyæna, but with this difference, that it did not as rapidly cover the ground.

My mare could at any time, after the first two hundred yards were passed, have run up alongside the quarry, but this I would not permit her to do, being satisfied to make the pace only sufficiently hot to pump the fugitive. In a quarter of a mile I had succeeded, for the poor brute refused to go any further, but sat down after the manner of a dog, and, looking at me with an inquiring, intelligent gaze,

seeming to ask for what reason I was thus persecuting it. Even now I would have spared the poor thing; but its skin was beautiful and valuable, and, further, had it not lived a marauder's life? Thus satisfying my conscience for what I was about to do, I dismounted. The aim I took was for the centre of the creature's breast, and death was instantaneous.

The most common observer of animal life can never mistake the cheetah for the leopard, for the former totally differs in shape, as well as colour, from the latter; however, it is a very handsome beast, very dog-like in character and disposition, and, if captured young, can easily be made a most interesting and affectionate pet.

As I returned to my mare, I saw a pallah, an animal now becoming very scarce, although at one time rather abundant all over the colony; this is much to be regretted, as it is a very handsome antelope.

What with the two springbok, the cheetah skin, and myself, the little mare had quite a load to carry, so I made my home journey at a slow pace. As the mare was a very fast walker, I rapidly overtook two pedestrians, when, to my surprise, I discovered them to be white men, and more disreputable-looking specimens of the breed I had seldom previously come in contact with. The clothing of the first was of blue serge for a groundwork, but it was patched and mended in so many places,

and with such a variety of materials, that very little indeed of the original garment was left. On his shoulders he carried a frying-pan, nicely balanced by a tin beaker attached to the far end of its handle. In his mouth was stuck a short pipe, out of which he was taking, in colonial parlance, a dry smoke—that is, it was alike destitute of fire or tobacco. The man of doubtful nationality was better dressed, for moleskin was the material he wore, and even African thorns have not the power of rending this all-resisting fabric. Across one shoulder he had slung a blanket, over the other about a quarter of a bag of mealy meal. Both were without socks or stockings, their feet being solely protected by most dilapidated veldt schoon.

Neither looked as if they had been acquainted with soap and water for a month of Sundays, while the dust that they had raised lay so thick upon them that without difficulty you could have made an admirable map upon their backs, or indited their names, with perfect legibility.

“Good day, friends; where bound?” was my salutation.

“Diamon’ Fields,” answered Pat.

“You have a long road before you, four hundred miles, if it’s an inch,” I responded.

“And what’s a hundred miles more or less to the likes of us, begorra? This is a free country, and devil a toll to pay,” was the answer I received.

So, without entering into further conversation, I told them my waggons were in front, and that I should be pleased to have them for my guests that evening. But scarcely had I issued this invitation, when I beheld my cavalcade advancing through clouds of dust.

On reaching the leading waggon, I found Cigar driving, and on inquiring why he had inspanned, he told me that there was a fine wooded vley in front, about five miles off, where there was an abundance of excellent grass, and that it would, in consequence, be a much better place to start from, on our long trek to Honey Vley, than our last halting-ground.

It took but little persuasion to induce the two travel-stained wanderers to take a seat on the waggon-box. A glass of cango (a colonial spirit which, when aged, is not to be despised) and a strong domestic cigar at once overcame their scruple at retracing their steps, and caused both to really look happy under circumstances that I believe even Mark Tapley himself would have given in to.

The sun was quite an hour high when we reached our destination. The vley, which was a couple of hundred yards long, looked like a permanent water, and round its margin grew numerous trees, the branches of those that hung over its surface being invariably terminated with one of those skilfully constructed and gracefully shaped nests for which

the white-browed weaver birds (*Plocepasser mahali*) are so justly celebrated.

"Two days' stay won't hurt us here," I said to Cigar.

"No, nor a week," was his reply.

So I issued the order for forty-eight hours' halt, the tent to be pitched, so as to make it more comfortable for our travel-stained guests ; and the best fare I possessed to be placed upon the table as soon as possible.

The dinner was quite a success, and successive drinks of cango made all comfortable. We should now have spent a very jolly evening, but that Pat would keep imbibing more than was good for him, and got quarrelsome in his cups. So I went for a walk.

During dinner I had learned who my visitors were. The son of the "Gem of the Sea" had visited outlying trading stations and Kaffir kraals, with thimble-rig and the three-card trick as his means of making a living. The other was a Scotchman. For twenty years he had been gold-mining in California, but had been attracted to the Transvaal from some flaming, lying report of the quantity of the precious metal to be obtained there.

But, to return to my stroll, when I returned to the vley of water, to my astonishment, numerous lights seemed to be moving on its surface. On closer examination I found that these torches were in the hands of men, and those men my servants. And

what do you suppose, gentle reader, they were doing? Firing the nests of the poor little weaver birds, and collecting the scorched, half-drowned victims as a *bonne bouche* on which to gratify their beastly appetites. Flesh and blood could not stand such a scene of barbarity as this long, so I ran "a-muck" amongst them, regardless of water and other impediments; but the black scoundrels were too quick for me, and thus all my energy and self-sacrifice were thrown away.

On returning to the tent, no light gleamed through the canvas, but fearful sounds were heard, such as, "I'll whip as much dog out of you as will make a full pack of hounds," then quickly followed by, "I'll be a perfect epidemic to you;" and winding up with, "I'll make you (crash), make you (crash) so ugly that the flies won't bite you."

In a minute I comprehended the situation; the bosom friends had quarrelled over politics and cango, and the American-Scotchman was giving the American-Irishman a regular drubbing.

As I did not wish a repetition of that painful affair of "the Kilkenny cats" to take place in my camp, particularly as one of the combatants was a Scotchman, and therefore practically unacquainted with how the game was played, I resolved to adopt a plan that once I knew to be successful under similar circumstances, viz. kick out the tent-pegs and let go the storm ropes of the tent. There is

nothing, believe me, reader, like being prompt in action ; so I acted at once. The camp fires lit up the surroundings, but on no place did they cast their illuminations so brilliantly as upon the scene of strife. The *tout ensemble* was so comical that even the curiosity of the dogs at once brought them around, when one and all simultaneously concluded that there was something under that broad sheet of canvas that they ought to try their teeth upon ; but I intervened in the nick of time, and drove the bellicose dogs off, for who was to know or could be aware, I will ask any one, “which was t’other and who was topmost ?”

At length the “lean one” found the entrance, and had a pretty good show of making an escape, but he was firmly withheld from doing so by the hand of his foe, who had a stiff grip upon the leg of his trousers, which garments, as I have formerly described as not owing the owner anything, from the amount of service they had rendered him, suddenly gave way, and the combat ceased.

As host, I resolutely insisted there should be no more quarrelling in my camp, so we adjourned to the waggon.

While Cigar was procuring the “square-face,” I had time to take a look around. There had been damage done bodily—more or less on both sides—but what mattered corporal ailments to the loss of Paddy’s breeks ? Everything, when you consider

that the probability was that he could not get another pair within ten days' journey.

Providence is an inscrutable thing, and not always just; for if the Scot had suffered the same deprivation—well, it would have but reduced him to a state he, in all human probability, had been accustomed to until the years he reached maturity. At least, that was my own experience and that of many others I could mention, who are exalted in the Army List. In fact, I have often thought that parents across the Tweed pursued this plan with their offspring for the sake of economy.

However, as we get older and travel, we get squeamish. I could not have the immodest sight about my camp—no, not under any consideration—of a white man going about it with only one leg to his trousers, so I gave him a brand-new pair of hunting breeches of the latest pattern and colour, which fitted him exactly, and were really very becoming, for they showed the development of his limbs to perfection. If he had had top, or even butcher boots to put on, and been spirited to the grass countries, he would have been the admiration, nay, envy of “the entire field” that attends the meets of any of our crack and aristocratic packs of foxhounds.

In the morning, when we assembled to have our “bitters,” without impertinently staring, I took a furtive glance at both my guests. He of “stern

and wild Caledonia" had suffered little; he of the "gem of the sea"—well, in popular melody I can best portray his misfortunes—

"Oh! what a surprise,
Two lovely black eyes."

I recommended an application of raw meat as the best remedy I knew of for such-like blemishes on the face, but the sufferer knew better; his father, grandfather, and how many more generations back I know not, for my memory did not properly comprehend when he got so far—but, reader, be certain that his was no ordinary lengthened genealogical tree—always externally applied weak gin-and-water to their similar contusions, so I gave in, and supplied what he desired.

The incidents of last night were very comical, at the same time too exciting to bear repetition, which looked more than probable, so I gave orders for trecking in the afternoon, and then went forth to wait till breakfast was ready. As I passed a tree, I surprised Pat, who was pouring his spirits down his throat. When he became cognizant of my presence, he explained to me that his arm was so stiff after last night's violent exercise, that he could not now get it high enough to bathe his eyes, so he thought that, under the circumstances, it might be quite as efficacious an internal as an external application.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WILD DOGS—HONEY-BIRDS.

AT three p.m. we inspanned. The former cronies refused to travel together any further; so, supplying both with tobacco, beltong, and a "wee drappie," I bade good-bye to each, the one bending his steps due east to the Transvaal, the other south to Moroquin, where I know Jim Parkins took care of him. I say know, for a finer specimen of a man or a kinder-hearted one than the said Jim does not exist.

All that night and the next day it was treck, treck, treck. Fortunately, the cattle were in such good condition, or else we must have stuck, for the belts of sand that we traversed were fearfully heavy—so much so that sometimes for a mile or more the felloes of the wheels were completely hidden by it, and breathing halts in consequence had frequently to be called. But I had the fortune to have Cigar for a superintendent, one of the very best drivers in South Africa, and yet he comparatively seldom used the whip.

The following morning, when walking ahead on

the trail, one of those impudent but interesting specimens of the ornithology of South Africa, the little honey-bird, most persistently insisted upon my following it. Its demands were so determinedly pressed, that several times it nearly brushed my face with its wings; so, considering that such forward conduct indicated that honey was near, I left the path and followed my volunteer guide.

I could have done this little more than half a mile when a magnificent bull gemsbok passed me, going at full gallop; as I did not wish to delay the waggons reaching water, which it would have entailed, if the carcass had to be drawn out to the road, I let the noble beast off without drawing a sight on his beauteous flanks.

Ten minutes after the bull had disappeared—and if he had kept up his running some three miles would have been traversed by him in that time—I heard a whimper, then another, and another, till many such notes were mixed up together, and well I knew what was coming, for the sound was as familiar to my ear as the voices of any pack of foxhounds I have ever ridden to. They were wild dogs, and what a chance I now had to see their mode of working! One led, flanked by a comrade on either side, but a little in rear, while the remainder—about fifteen—were close up, not a skirter, straggler, or tailer in the lot. In old hunting parlance, veritably the pack might have been covered with

a blanket ; and, remember, this is in a country proverbial for bad scent.

They could not have been unaware of my presence, but it did not alter their purpose—they were hunting to kill, and were resolved to do it.

This episode caused my little guide to desert me ; but as I return to the trail I may say that there are two honey-birds, the larger and smaller, the latter being my late friend. Le Vaillant gave it the name of *Le petit indicateur*, which appears to me more appropriate than the classical synonyms that it has more recently received. The edges of the Kalihari are its favourite haunts, and although so partial to honey, in my belief its more frequent food is bees or emmets ; in gratifying its taste for the former the natives say that often the plucky little creature gets stung to death. Its costume is a sombre brown, so that when at rest it would scarcely attract the attention of the ordinary wayfarer.

Soon after joining the waggons, the country had undergone quite a change ; for, in place of comparatively dead flats, rolling hills, certainly of no great elevation, surrounded us, and these were fairly covered with trees.

We had been warned to look out for lions here, so took every precaution to prevent our being taken by surprise, by keeping the spare cattle and horses well together, with our powerful lanterns in full

state of illumination both before and behind them. Certainly, the locality looked exactly such a place as the king of beasts would select for an ambuscade, and I did not hesitate to express a hope to Chummy that we should get through this gorge without losing some of our stock, when smash, almost with the report of a shot gun, went the dissel-boom of the leading waggon, and the cavalcade was brought to a standstill.

Of a truth, the road was rough, so rough that no conveyance on earth but a Cape waggon would have attempted its passage ; but our gear and fittings had been so well tested that we had every faith in their enduring any possible strain. Thus, the more provoking was this accident, and occurring just at a place where it was desirable all should hold together.

To add to our inconvenience, the stupid bullocks of the wrecked craft, now that they had no waggon to draw, bolted, and nearly a quarter of an hour of most valuable time was, in consequence, lost before they could be recovered. But this was not all the trouble in store for us that night ; the guard of the spare stock must desert their charges to help to find the truants, the consequence being that when they returned there was not a loose horse or ox to be found. This produced a further delay of half an hour.

However, "all's well that ends well." Cigar and

I found a tree close at hand that suited for a temporary dissel-boom. My American experience with the axe in the lumber regions did me good service, for soon I had the pole blocked out with an adze, the eye reduced to the proper size, and the 2-in. auger in a few minutes cut the necessary hole for a fresh skimmel-pin ; so, before an hour had expired from the time of the accident occurring, we were again under way.

An hour before day we entered a forest of quite respectable timber, and entirely free from underbush, where we outspanned in close vicinity to a cattle-kraal. Here coffee was enjoyed, enriched by an abundant supply of milk obtained from the herdsmen in charge of it ; when again the word was *inspan-amba ! amaga !* and ere the sun was an hour high, we halted on the summit of a bluff overlooking the long-sought Honey Vley. All knew we had still some miles to go before water could be obtained, but the scene before us was so beautiful that none appeared in a hurry to depart.

The vley, which is about three miles long, but much less wide, resembled exactly one of those diminutive lakes to be found in Scotland, the water breaking gently on the shores, with silent filmy mists rising from it, while cattle, that is, vildebeeste, walked along the opposite margin. Water was not expected here, but could we disbelieve our eyes ? No, cer-

tainly not—so Chummy and self argued—for there it was, of a certainty ; but, before we had half completed our descent to its shores, what a miserable deception we found had been practised upon us, for we had gazed upon the now hateful vley through the deceptive influences of a mirage. Not a drop of water was in it ; a crust of salt covered it from end to end ; it was a fraud, and that of the basest kind. Nevertheless, the surroundings of this salt-pan were remarkably beautiful, and reminded me much of the picturesque bluffs to be found on the upper waters of the Mississippi, U.S. ; but along the vley's margin, just where the soil joined the sand that framed in the earth deposit, was a thick fringe of lovely mimosa trees, now doubly beautiful from their dense covering of fragrant yellow blossoms.

Detached parties of guinea-fowl were hurrying across the open to the shelter of this grove. So numerous were these game birds that I can safely assert that many hundreds of them were in sight at one time, so Chummy took his shot gun and hurried off in their pursuit, with the hope of sport and adding materially to our food supply.

Soon after I heard many rapid shots, so concluded that "spatch cock" would probably form no inconsiderable part of the anxiously anticipated breakfast, as for the last day or two meals had been hurried and far from satisfactorily cooked. I can get on well enough upon rough fare ; but that is no reason

to say that I do not enjoy a well-cooked and well-served meal when attainable.

As is my rule, I was trudging along at the head of the cavalcade, hoping that the distance was short to the outspan and water. One of the curs was with me, whose objection to shooting—yes, and probably his cowardice—made him a staunch attendant on the waggon.

Well, this unworthy representative of a noble race preceded me by a few paces, and, to my utter amazement, pointed something—fancy such a brute pointing—and, as far as I could see, the sand before him was as bare as a plank! Rather out of temper at the absurdity of the whole affair, I attempted to force the dog forward, but go he would not; the creature seemed dazed as well as terrified. This was a new experience; yet, arguing that there is never a result without a cause, I called out for Cigar, who fortunately was near. In a moment after he joined me, and as he did so, down came his twenty-foot driving whip on the ground, and under where his formidable weapon struck, in the agony of a broken back, writhed one of the largest puff-adders I have almost ever seen.

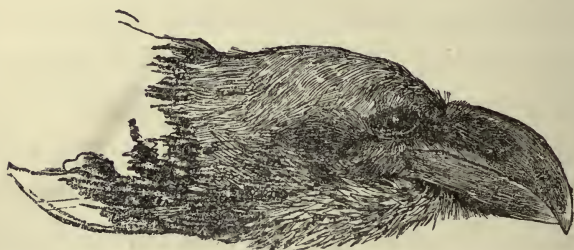
I cannot say that the cur saved me from being bitten, or that, having been bitten, I should have died; however, the ill-bred, badly conducted, and worse-looking dog deserved my thanks.

We had scarcely reached our camping-place

when I ordered a halt, for the sand was very heavy and the day becoming excessively warm. While thus waiting, I perceived Chummy a short distance behind, the rapidity of his walk indicating plainly that he was desirous of overtaking us. Before he had got over the last two hundred yards I could see at a glance that something was wrong, for the native who carried his gun and game had an indecision in his progression that said plainly "the further I keep from my employer the better;" while again, some distance in rear of him, came three of the dogs, of whom the pointer was one, whose expressions and manners were so indisputably marked "shamefaced," that there could not exist in the beholder's mind one moment of doubt but that their conscience pricked them for some act of ingratitude which hunger or a love of mischief had induced them to perpetrate.

The annoyances my friend had been subjected to were soon told. Out of the eight shots he had fired, six guinea-fowl had been killed; of these he was only able to secure two, for between the greyhounds and the pointer the other birds had been torn to pieces and eaten right before him. Moreover, the gun-bearer, in spite of every entreaty to save the birds, was so slow in acting, that I fully think that Chummy believed that he was a *particeps criminis* in the dogs' offences, and therefore loth to use any extra exertion to put a termination to their tantalizing game. Another grievance against

the dogs, in my friend's eyes, was that they would not come up when called, like respectable, well-broken animals, and receive the whipping they justly merited. In truth, I did not blame them for their caution. Dogs are wonderful judges of physiognomy, and Chummy's physiognomy told, as plain as language could express, what they might expect if once captured.



RAVEN'S HEAD (*Corvultur albicollis*).

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BIG ZULU IN FORM—BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.

TRECK, TRECK, was again the pass-word ; the patient steers once more strained upon their yokes ; inch by inch we cut our way through the heavy sand, and soon entered upon firm ground, when the rate of progression increased. From it we got to grass land, crisp, short, and firm, when the cattle broke into a trot, and in a few minutes after we were outspanned upon what, with some show of justice, might be called the village green.

All the mature men, those that were young and fit for active service, were away from the kraal with their chief, Bareekey ; thus we were received by that potentate's new wife and a large staff of eligible young ladies, the whole being under the care of three decrepit greybeards, of an average age of at least fourscore years. These venerables unquestionably did their best to preserve propriety in the ranks of their charges, and I doubt not but that they thought that they succeeded admirably ; but never were elderly

gentlemen more mistaken, for the court attachment among the young ladies of Honey Vley knew how to flirt, make eyes, and exhibit other blandishments as well as any of their white sisters that I ever came in contact with.

The heart of William, the big Zulu, was evidently affected by the attention he received from these nymphs, for he confided to me, quite innocently, that he thought he would rather remain at Honey Vley than go back to Zululand, more especially as he could get a wife here without buying her, and there was more than one of the young ladies who appeared to think that she would not object to his making this change of nationality. This I am not so much surprised at, for William was really a very handsome fellow, straight as a rush, broad-chested, without an ounce of superfluous flesh, while his muscular development was simply grand.

Like the majority of big men, a little "fatty-plumpy" baby-faced miss seemed to find greatest favour in his sight, while the jealousy she caused in the breasts of her sisters of more stalwart proportions was quite delightful to witness. Several times angry passages of words passed between her and them; and when such occurred it was evident that the little one's tongue was quite a match for her antagonists'. At length the chief's wife took her departure, and with her went the whole retinue; so, once more, we had the camp to ourselves, if I except

a couple of aged warriors, who were doubtlessly left to act as spies upon our actions.

One of these men was far from a bad fellow in his way, was quite communicative, and had evidently been a great Nimrod in his time. From him I learned that a family of lions had taken up their residence in a kloof not over a couple of miles distant, and that one of this interesting coterie had had the presumption to carry off a kid a few days back, about milking time (sunset), from almost the very spot on which we were now outspanned. We mutually agreed to defer our search for their tawny majesties till the morrow.

After tiffin—or breakfast, whichever you like to call it, for both meals were combined in one—I took a stroll over the adjoining grass lands, and so great were the numbers of quails I flushed, that I resolved to tie up all the dogs, except the pointer, procure my shot gun, and go in for a regular afternoon's enjoyment. No sooner had I come to this decision than I acted upon it. However, I was a little delayed by the insubordination of Donna, the pointer, whom want of work had made quite regardless of consequences as well as defiant of all orders. After several fruitless efforts, I ultimately succeeded in catching her and making her acquainted with the virtues of a piece of green rhein. It is astonishing what a wholesome effect this treatment had ; morally and physically she became at once an altered being,

and would, from the time of her punishment to her return home, have done credit to her master even at a field trial.

Seldom have I seen quails so abundant, although I have occasionally made wonderful bags of them by the shores of the Mediterranean and in China. From their extreme tameness on this occasion, I should imagine that they had just arrived after a long migration. These birds are identical with those that occasionally visit our British shores—in fact, the *Coturnix communis*. Although I have found this game little beauty scattered nearly all over South Africa, it is only periodically that they arrive in large numbers. Thus, in 1865, countless flights of them found their way even into the suburbs of Cape Town. Another quail is also found in this part of the world, but it is very scarce, so that for purposes of sport it is almost unnecessary to enumerate it; however, in the eyes of the ornithological collector it is a specimen of no mean value. Its classical name is *Coturnix histrionica*. Mr. Chapman, the well-known traveller and naturalist, obtained specimens of this species in the vicinity of Lake Ngami.

But to return to my shooting, When I had bagged about fifteen couple I despatched them by my attendant to our camp, so that some might be prepared for our evening meal. The afternoon had got clouded over, and a fresh breeze sprung up,

making exercise delightful—in fact, producing a craving for it; so further and further from the wag-gons I wandered. At length I reached the summit of the ridges of hills that bounded to the north the valley in which the station of Honey Vley is situated. From there I beheld a lovely stretch of country, not unlike what can be seen among the Surrey hills, only the emerald-like greenness of the herbage was wanting. After rain such would not have been the case; still, the landscape had none of that burned up, arid appearance that the hills of Spain present from the seaboard at midsummer, and this attractive land is situated on the margin of the great Kalihari Desert. Desert is a misnomer for that country; the term is apt to mislead people, and induce the reader to think that the Kalihari is exactly like the Sahara. Not so; the former is covered at intervals with trees and grass, the latter is an almost illimitable ocean of sand.

From the ridge that I had gained, I detected a large extent of mealy gardens and grass; there I resolved to proceed to refill my bag, as appearances were very much in its favour to find quail there abundant.

Springbok and vildebeeste I found numerous, but wild; as I advanced, they kept retreating, sometimes gathering in dense bodies, again separating, but always advancing up wind. However, the quail did not appear to regard them, for on the ground

that these antelopes had passed over the pointer found abundant occupation, and single and double shots were afforded in rapid succession. Here my boy rejoined me. Soon after he called my attention to the fact of the herd of large game dividing when they came in the vicinity of about a dozen or more mapani bushes, one half taking a wide detour to the westward, the other half to the eastward. The Hottentot did not understand this circumstance, and, more, did not like it; but after a short time he got less uneasy, when he informed me that he thought that there was a hyæna or jackal in that bush. So on I went shooting, thinking little and caring less what kind of beast it was, as long as I filled my bag or made good shooting. By this time the pointer was within thirty yards of the mapani brush, quartering her ground at racing pace, when she suddenly pulled up, and half pointing, half drawing, advanced direct for the cover. I and the boy were not over twenty yards behind her, when, at less than double that distance, directly in front of the dog, a magnificent black-maned lion showed himself.

At first I thought the beast was determined to charge, from the circumstance that he held his tail aloft, almost as stiff as a broom-handle, and curled up his lips so as to exhibit his teeth; but if such had been his first resolve, he soon changed his intention. Possibly this was caused by the action of the pointer, who, from the first, evinced an inclination to get

behind the lion, and I have little doubt with a desire to try her tusks on his hide ; for this dog, as I have said before, was entirely without fear. Of course, she might have paid dearly for her temerity ; possibly escaped scatheless, for often the very rashness of a deed saves the perpetrator from punishment.

The noble beast, after viewing us for about three minutes, slowly and hesitatingly turned round and retired, first in a very measured walk, which gradually became more hurried as the distance between us was increased ; all the time, however, keeping an eye upon the foe, so as to note what was their course of action. When the retire was changed into a hurried retreat, to my alarm I beheld the fearless Donna bring up the rear, and giving tongue in pursuit, like a whole pack of beagles.

If I had been charged, I was determined what to do, viz. wait till the enemy was within nearly touching distance, then give him the contents of both barrels in the face. By adopting such a course I once killed a bear in Wisconsin ; but bears are not lions. I have forgotten to say that my attendant, the Hot-tentot, although armed with nothing but a stick, stuck to my elbow like a man, and never evinced by look or gesture one particle of fear. Thus I lost a chance of adding a trophy to my collection which few have ever had, and which I am not likely to have again.

My henchman, Cigar, when he heard the adven-

ture narrated, was full of excitement, and carefully made his plans for to-morrow's campaign; every villager fit for work was to be pressed into the service, and as to the result, well, he had no doubt upon that point, it was simply bound to be successful, but we will see—"Man proposes, God disposes."

I should mention, by the way, that Cigar has picked up an old acquaintance here. He is a cousin, of course, as he always dubs his friends. But I have come to the conclusion that this endearing appellation is employed to make the visitor free of the flesh-pots; for who ever heard of a Hottentot lacking in hospitality, especially when his employer is the sufferer? This man is remarkable in appearance for nothing but his ugliness; but if he receives a true character as a spoorer and hunter, he is second to no one in Africa south of the Zambesi. Judging from the conversation of these two worthies and the time it lasted—long after midnight—they have gone through some stirring adventures together, when ivory hunting was a profitable business. This incessant chattering doubtless kept off the nocturnal prowlers, for not a growl, snarl, or howl disturbed the stillness of the night.

In the morning Madame Bareekey showed the cloven foot. On our arrival she had supplied us with milk at sixpence a bottle. Through whim, or freak, she now demanded two shillings for the same quantity. Arguing against such extortion is useless;

so I took a firm stand, and told her ladyship that, sooner than concede to her demands, we would do without milk. So off she flounced to the village, with all her retinue in attendance, vowing at the top of their voices, and gesticulating with all the energy that their arms could command, that never since they could remember had they seen such a skinflint white man as myself. As we intended remaining here some days, it would never have done to have submitted to be imposed upon in regard to the milk, for everything else that we required from the natives would have at once gone up in proportion. However, madame knew how to be revenged upon us, and in a manner we least expected it, viz. by tabooing the white men, and forbidding any of her people to show us game or even inform us where it was to be found.

Cigar had a very oily tongue, and could lie like a pickpocket when occasion required, so I gave him diplomatic powers to try and bring the quarrel to a termination; but, although he went backwards and forwards between the waggons and village all the morning, at midday he was as far off from coming to terms as he had been when he undertook his mission. Thus, after tiffin, I resolved to fire a parting shot at the foe, which I fondly hoped was certain to make her haul down her colours, viz. send her a copy of her husband's letter, given me on my road up country, enjoining her to treat me with unbounded

hospitality, and order her people to show me all the game in the locality. For half an hour I patiently waited to learn the success of this last effort. Soon after I perceived Cigar returning, escorted by madame and all her maids. Inwardly I chuckled to myself, "At length I have made you surrender." But I had counted my chickens before they were hatched.

With stately step and flashing eyes, the lady sailed into the camp. When she reached me she halted, and her retinue ranged themselves on each side of their leader. With the utmost gravity and order this was accomplished, after which a pause ensued, then madame, holding out the copy of Bareekey's letter in her left hand and pointing to it with her right in the most scornful manner, spoke.

"This is from Bareekey, is it, and he orders me to give you what you want, and orders me" (with great scorn) "to send my people to hunt with you? Am I a Zulu that was bought with cows, or a slave of a Kaffir from the old colony? No; I own this country, my father gave it to me, and it is mine. Bareekey comes here when it suits his pleasure, but let him come or stay away, I'll have none of his orders. Thus I respect them." And the ter-magant tore the offensive slip of paper into the tiniest particles and scattered it to the winds.

A round of approving applause greeted this display of rhetoric. When it had subsided, the indignant



dusky matron drew her drapery around her, for she wore a cotton skirt, turned on her heels, and marched off at the head of her black satellites. Cigar was my interpreter; word for word he translated what she said, and much was I disappointed. I must truly acknowledge that I never saw a finer piece of acting in my life.

To get over my annoyance, I mounted my horse and went for a ride. About five miles from home I came across a quantity of game, and the first elands I had seen this trip. They were apparently in very poor condition, and on extremely bad galloping ground, so I let them go; not that we did not require meat, but for the reason that they would have taken a great deal out of my horse before I could have forced them to come to a standstill.

On my way home I visited the honey cave, from which the kraal takes its name. It is situated in the face of a bluff that overlooks the salt-pan, and still contains an immense quantity of honey. This place is historical among hunters' annals, for here the mighty Nimrod, Gordon Cumming, long resided. Then it was the centre of the finest elephant and rhinoceros district, probably, in all South Africa. Alas! none of these mammoths of the animal creation are to be found at the present day within hundreds of miles of it. The indiscriminate introduction of firearms by the traders is the cause of the wholesale butchery that has occurred of these

valuable beasts. It is common for us, the residents of Great Britain, to rail against Americans for having permitted the buffalo to become exterminated on their Western prairies. Wherever we have gone we have done likewise. Does the adage about those that live in glass houses never occur to us?

On returning to camp, I found that things had not gone smoothly during my absence. William, the big Zulu, had been detected in purloining sugar and other stores to give to his lady love, so was now a prisoner; the bullocks had been permitted, through the want of attention of the herd, to enter some of the natives' gardens, and do no end of mischief to their melon crops, for which injury Madame Bareekey demanded a startling indemnity, not an iota of which charge would she abate. Arguing with an angry woman is ever futile. This instance, although the lady was black, was no exception to the rule; so high words and abusive epithets on her side were becoming dominant, when two strangers arrived. One was poor Paddy, the other a trader whom I had known for some years. The former had fallen in with some of his favourite Boers, who had almost stripped him, maltreated him fearfully, and left him upon the veldt to die. Fortunately his present comrade found him, and relieved and sheltered him in his dreadful plight. But why had they sought me? Well, to give me information that these free-booting scoundrels had heard of my whereabouts,

and were in consequence resolved upon the capture and appropriation of all my property. Paddy and his acquaintance had ridden hard to give me timely warning, and even now, at the uttermost, I had not above three or four days' grace before the raiders would be at Honey Vley. This information fell like a clap of thunder on Madame Bareekey. Terrible was her anguish when she heard that the dreaded Boers were about to visit her; and she, who had formerly ruled with a rod of iron, now became the weakest of her sex.

"Would we desert her? Would we not stay and put up scances (loop-holed walls) and defend her? We might have milk, beef, everything without payment; but surely we would not leave her to the tender mercies of the Boers."

As the station was admirably situated for defence, and could really be made strong by throwing up a few earthworks, and the digging of some rifle-pits to command the entrance to the kraal, we determined to remain for a time. But the dreaded enemy did not come; so we resolved to treck to Kania, in Hasesheba's country, there to wait results, as the disturbed state of the country put further hunting out of the question.

However, in concluding this volume, and the second series of "The Game of South Africa," I would say, for the information of those who do not crave for the destruction of elephants and kindred

mammoths, that there are few places where they will find greater varieties of game, a prettier country, and a more delightful climate than are to be met with at Honey Vley, on the eastern margin of the Kalihari Desert.



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